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Glen A. Pierce

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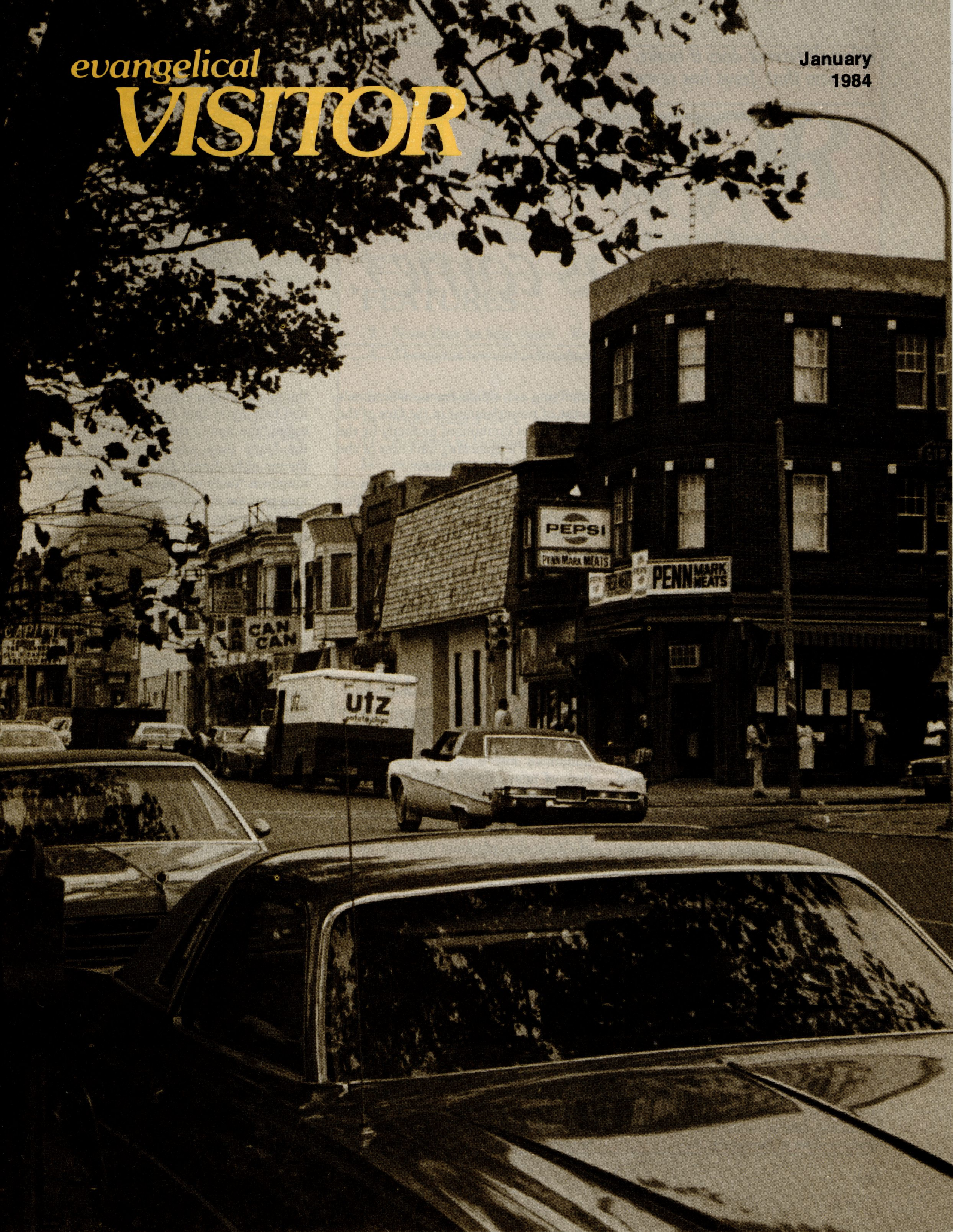
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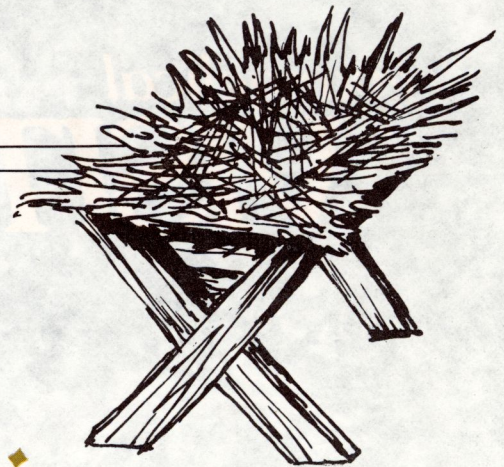
January
1984



*What difference does it make,
now that Jesus has come?*



Now that he has come...



Kenneth L. Gible

I don't think there is an official name for it. I call it the-after-Christmas-blues. Have you begun to feel the first gnawings of them, the grim return of life unadorned by candlelight, holly, and Christmas cheer?

But maybe you've never had such feelings. I'm not at all sure they are a universal thing. My introduction to this sense of foreboding grew out of my boyhood days. It was a weekly phenomenon especially acute in those years when I hated school. The high point of my week was Friday afternoon at dismissal time. The rest of that day, all day Saturday and the first half of Sunday, were great fun. How I enjoyed the freedom from the four walls of the schoolhouse.

But sometime around late afternoon on Sunday, that enjoyment began to fade. Try as I might, I could not keep from falling into a sense of helplessness, of dread, even of terror as the darkness of a winter Sunday evening approached. I knew it was ridiculous to feel as I did. "School isn't all that bad," I kept telling myself. But no amount of rationalizing could drive the feeling away. And what I suffered near the close of the Christmas holidays is beyond telling.

It is fashionable among adults, especially at this time of year, to think of childhood as a time of innocence and fun, as a period in a person's life free from the heavy responsibilities and anxieties of adulthood. I do not share that view. As difficult as the world of grown-ups sometimes is, there is nothing in it as

terrifying as a child's fears—when one's sense of powerlessness in the face of the unknown is symbolized perfectly by the irreversible lengthening darkness of the weekend drawing to a close.

It is this remembrance that nudges me on the days that follow Christmas. For the days ahead will be the proving ground of the Promise.

It's the same ground to be tread when a new President is elected, when a new pastor comes to the church, when a mother brings the baby home from the hospital, when the couple returns from the honeymoon. The moments of celebration are over; now it is time to learn if the bright promise will prove out.

If ever there is a time when doubt confronts us, it is in the days which loom ahead. And so in the middle of Christmas bills to be paid, of youngsters underfoot and bored to near-distracted, of news reports which reveal that nations are far from putting into practice the angels' message of peace on earth; we may wonder what the birthday of Christ was all about anyhow. What difference does it make—really—now that he has come?

That same question must have haunted Mary and Joseph as they made their way to Jerusalem to present their new son to the Lord. Their trip to the temple was in keeping with Jewish law; they brought with them two common doves as the proper offering. In this they were no different from other couples who brought their first-born sons for dedication.

But the thoughts that kept troubling Mary and Joseph were not shared by other parents. The carpenter and his wife had been visited by heavenly messengers who had promised wonderful

things about this little child. The angel had told Mary that her baby would be called "the Son of the Most High," that the Lord God would give him "the throne of his father David," that of his kingdom "there will be no end." A glorious promise indeed!

The months had passed quickly, and the child was born. And then the strange sight of shepherds visiting in the night, and later on visitors from the East with their wonderful gifts. Surely the hand of God was in these things.

But now, more than a month later, the strange happenings seemed long past. There had been no more angel voices, no more visits by strangers with gifts. Everything had gone back to normal, and perhaps the parents were beginning to wonder why God was remaining so silent. If this child was to be what the angel had said, then why was he apparently no different from other babies? He cried just as much as they, he demanded just as much attention, and he had the very same need to be changed—often!

Just like you and me, Joseph and Mary must have wondered how life could move so swiftly from the sublime to the commonplace. They had entered the proving ground of the Promise.

So they came to the Temple and suddenly this old man approached them. He took the child in his arms, rejoiced that God's promise to Israel had been fulfilled, and then said something that must have greatly troubled Mary and Joseph.

This child is chosen by God to cause many in Israel to fall and many to rise; he will be a sign from God which many people will speak against, and so reveal their secret

Kenneth Gible—writer, editor, and instructor—lives in Harrisburg, Pa.

thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart (Luke 2:34-35 TEV).

This too is what life is to be, now that he has come. Not only joyous celebration by heavenly choirs, not only the fatiguing routine of day-by-day necessity, but the possibility of genuine evil—evil deadly enough to break a mother's heart. And out there in the unknown years-to-be, Mary felt rather than saw the shadow of a cross on a lonely hill.

And if this is true, if—now that the Savior is born—life will contain great stretches of life routinely lived, to be broken occasionally by overwhelming joy and overpowering sorrow, then what has changed? Has not life ever been thus? What difference does it make, now that he has come?

Let me tell you, as simply and plainly as I can, what difference it makes.

Now that he has come, we know that God lives up to his promises. We know because Jesus is the living evidence of God's trustworthiness.

Now that he has come, we know that God stands with us in every season of our lives. We know because Jesus lived life just as you and I do. He was not a celestial foreigner who just dropped in for a casual visit. He was a human being who worked long and hard, faced temptation, knew joy and sorrow.

Now that he has come, we know we are not alone when we face the terrors of our existence—loneliness, pain, and death. We know because Jesus faced each of them in turn and suffered the full measure of their power.

Now that he has come, we know that nothing the future holds can overcome the love God has for us. We know because God raised Jesus from the tomb, and through him gives us the promise of eternal life.

It *does* matter that he has come. For people of faith, the future is the same unknown quantity as it is to people with no faith at all. Bright Sunday afternoons lengthening into dark, cold Sunday evenings may still trigger a remembrance of childhood fears.

But there is something else. It is the assurance that God holds the future in his loving, powerful hands. It is the assurance that victory over all that threatens us—a victory begun in Jesus Christ—will be completed in God's own good time.

This is the gift God offers on the days *after* Christmas, a gift that is given new every day of a new year, a gift which none other than God can give. ■

evangelical VISITOR

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he task of urban evangelism is urgently upon us, whether we like it or not. The Holy Spirit is moving his people back into

the cities to labor in church building with supernatural energy in the midst of super-human problems. The divine urge to "go and make disciples" includes vast metropolitan expanses often neglected by a society which is bent on "upward and outward mobility" while at the same time being focused on the "inward" self.

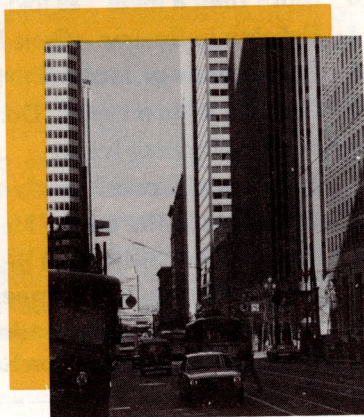
Today the cry of the cities will not be silenced. The evangelicals (and especially those of us from an Anabaptist heritage) have a century of urban homework to make up, as we rediscover the startling fact that throughout history God has had a deep concern for urban masses and that the pages of Scripture are full of the footprints of his messengers who lived and ministered there. We are realizing in a new way that the Great Commission clearly intends for us to begin "in Jerusalem."

Before we can begin to piece together a theology to guide us in urban evangelism and church life, we must admit several embarrassing facts. (This may be distasteful, but it is necessary for a clear self-identity and understanding as we pursue our goals.) First: the Protestant churches must acknowledge that they (although allegedly possessing the "perfect love that casts out all fear") have often fled the cities in panic on the escalator to the suburbs as waves of immigrants or minorities moved into the vacuums left in the heart of American cities. The Roman Catholic Church is the one that had a commitment to a geographical parish and stayed to minister to the masses of newcomers. Second: from the start, Americans have espoused a deep anti-urban bias which still pervades our thinking today, often beclouding our attitude toward urban people, even in evangelism. Thomas Jefferson viewed the cities as being "pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of man." Today's Americans often ask,

"Can anything good come out of the city?" Third: modern evangelical mission movements have not been very effective in urban settings. Donald McGavran, often called the "father of the church growth movement," writes in *Understanding Church Growth*:

After a hundred and fifty years of modern missions, the plain fact is that churches have not done well in most cities of Africa. The great movements to Christ have taken place among country people.

Fourth: although Anabaptism was forged in fiery urban settings, its descendants have long since become "the quiet in the land." We prefer to be



"peace churches" through non-confrontation and quietistic rural lifestyles. Persecution and conflict could not quench our original evangelistic zeal, but it finally drove us "underground," where we have remained all too comfortably.

While these realities are indeed sobering, we need not despair. The original Evangelist is still among us. He is Lord of history, including current urban history. He can help us forge a new application of his timeless word to our current task (which is really all that theology is). We can embrace the urban challenge before us as a great gift from God for

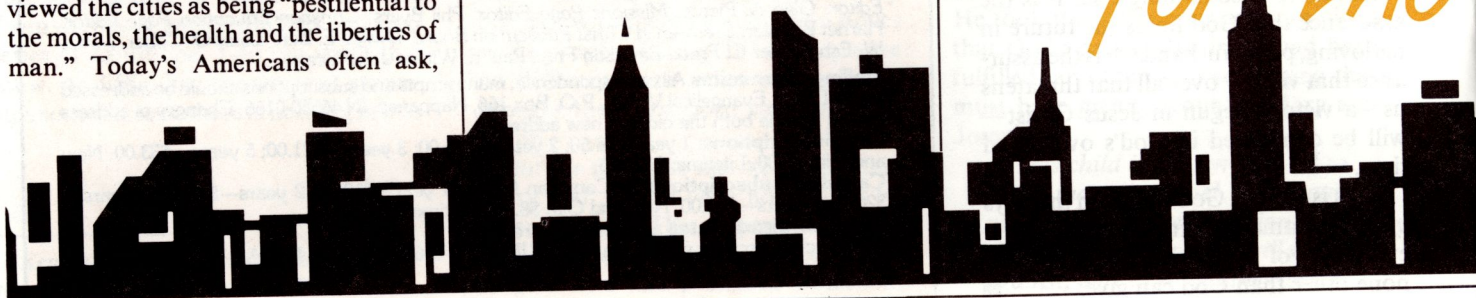
revitalizing the church. We can become messengers of hope to an urban world often filled with despair.

Historic Anabaptism offers a unique application of Christian principles. These may just find fertile soil in today's urban populations, if courageously and knowledgeably applied. We suggest at least the following four broad categories as basic to an urban reformulation of Anabaptism.

1. One Posture

We must begin by developing a more positive stance towards cities and urban life. We have been misled to believe that since the first biblical city was built by Cain; that since Sodom, Gomorrah, and Babylon typify evil in some biblical passages; and that since there is much wickedness and violence in cities today—God therefore abhors the cities. (However, we don't argue on the other hand that because the first murder occurred on a farm, we should therefore avoid farming.) Life began in a garden, but it will culminate in a city—the "New Jerusalem," with all the nations streaming into and out of it (see Rev. 21:24). In fact, both the old and new Jerusalem seem to reveal God's paradigm for urban life: many people living in loving proximity and peace, where righteousness is practiced, and where blessings flow not only to those within the walls but to and from the surrounding countryside as well (Ps. 72:16; Zech. 8:1-8; Jer. 29:1-7; Rev. 21). Cities are the simple result of human nature. We are a gregarious people created by a gregarious God. We were *made* to live together as neighbors,

Thoughts
for the



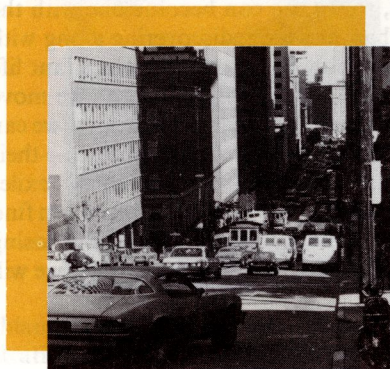
brothers, and sisters, just as we are also made to keep and cultivate the earth. City and country can live in a happy symbiotic relationship, both living out God's ideals and enjoying his blessings.

The divine urge, implanted deeply in every person, finds its best expression in agape love. Agape love must govern all of our actions as well as our attitudes. The Anabaptists talked much of the rule of Christ, which is the rule of love (John 15). God loved the world (including its cities) enough to sacrifice an only Son. He would have saved Sodom and Gomorrah for 10 righteous people, and *did* save the entire city of Nineveh because he loved it more than did his messenger Jonah (He, too, may have suffered from an anti-urban bias!). Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and Paul loved the cities so much that he made them the focus of his missionary life. We tend to focus on the problems; they focused on the *people* to be redeemed.

We must recapture the divine urge to go into *all* the world, with the love of Christ compelling us. In our evangelism, whether at home or abroad, we need to take *one* posture towards all people everywhere, the posture of love and reconciliation. When the Swiss Anabaptist George Blaurock faced expulsion from his native city of Zurich during the Reformation, he protested that he would rather *die* than leave his city. He quoted Ps. 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it," in his defense. We need to recapture Blaurock's theology of place, and see the city as *one* important place for living out Kingdom values. Otherwise, we can become hit-and-run evangelists, proclaiming to the cities,

"God loves you, but we don't." And our lives may suggest a limited gospel which says, "God can save you, but not here."

Holding the city in positive regard will mean that we exegete the city as well as the Bible. We study, examine, and pray for it, learning all we can about urban dynamics and social systems, in order to understand the systemic evils which oppress people. We will discover *from within* how systems of injustice and violence *create* poverty. We will dis-



cover that sin is not only personal, but structural as well. The poor are not primarily poor because of personal mistakes or sins like alcoholism, adultery, and the like (although that is true of some poor people). Many are poor because the educational system, the housing structures, and employment procedures often are simply not fair. The new people of God will commit themselves to changing those social structures.

This positive posturing towards the city is an absolutely essential first step towards reclaiming it for Christ. We

cannot serve those we do not love and understand.

2. One God

The second step is that of recovering the lofty monotheism of Israel's prophets, which says we will have no other gods but Jahweh, the creator and sustainer of the universe, the Father of Jesus Christ who is Lord of lords and King of kings. Jesus came announcing a Kingdom. We are already living in that Kingdom and subject to its King and his principles. Our first allegiance is to Christ. We must decide our ethics and lifestyles by his teachings. While the Kingdom of God has already been inaugurated, it has not yet been fully realized. It will be consummated after Christ returns, but meanwhile we are caught in the tension between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, which still holds sway over unredeemed humanity.

In the constant tension of living in the already-but-not-yet kingdom, many of our acts will be perceived as political, just as were circumcision and prophecy in the Old Testament and baptism in the New (also among the early Anabaptists). When we declare our first loyalty to a power higher than the principalities and powers, we precipitate conflict. Kingdom principles often run directly counter to those prevailing in society. Therefore, when we work for peace and justice in the name of Christ, we encounter resistance from the powers that promote greed and warfare in the name of earthly powers.

next page, please

**Freeman J. Miller and
Ronald J. Sider**

*toward a theology
urban church*



urban church ...

Like the early Anabaptists, the urban church needs to openly declare that it serves only one God and lives unashamedly by his book, the Bible, as the ultimate authority for faith and life. That declaration, if consistently lived up to, will inevitably be seen as political, for it means the church will live respectfully as good citizens under earthly rulers but will uncompromisingly "obey God rather than men" where human law contradicts divine law.

The church will seek the total welfare—spiritual, social, economic, and psychological—of urban people; but that does not mean that we lose the evangelistic passion for leading individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The most complete, most permanent alleviation of crime, poverty, oppression, and injustice happens as people are reconciled to God and to each other, and form communities of "the new humanity in Christ." Any programs which are not anchored in God's redemptive love will eventually fail because they are rooted in a defeated kingdom.

3. One Model

The incarnation of Christ will become the central model for all urban ministry and church life. Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21). Paul tells us in Philippians 2 that we are to have the same mind (attitude) which Jesus had. "What would Jesus do?" will not be an empty, hollow slogan chanted glibly on Sunday morning, but will be the most serious question the urban church can ask in every circumstance it faces. The church, his body, continues in a very special sense the physical presence and work of Christ

on earth today. That is the purpose of the church: to *be* his presence, and to carry on his work. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church will do "even greater works," Christ said (John 14:12 KJV).

The incarnation as model yields some powerful principles for shaping the life and ministry of the urban church. Jesus did not cling selfishly to his rights and possessions, but emptied himself and for our sakes became poor to make us rich (2 Cor. 8:9). Just as he became *one* with us, so we too can become one with the urban masses, rediscovering along with them how to live out the abundant life under modern conditions. As we move in among the urban populations, we can work and pray for their shalom—their peace and well-being—Hebrew exiles did in Babylon, and in their shalom find our own shalom (Jer. 29:7). By "losing our lives" with Christ in the city, we will



"find" them. The church will *move into* (rather than flee from) the troubled hearts of our cities because Jesus went where the troubled people were.

Since Christ dealt not only with people's spirits or souls, but also with their hunger, disease, and imprisonment, we will practice holistic ministry, too. We too will refuse to use violence, to amass wealth selfishly, to yield easily to the mores of society, or to discriminate against anyone. This list could go on indefinitely (and must, in fact, for each

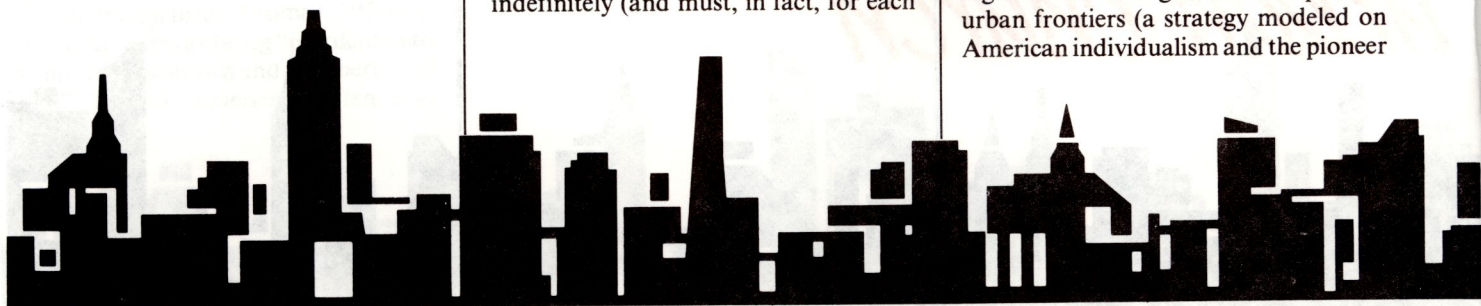
new situation the church faces). Here we can only say that as a general rule the example of Jesus is still the primary example for us. We do not pigeonhole his teachings as impracticable in modern city life. By his grace we live them out even in toughest situations. The circumstances and applications may change, but the principles remain. Christ's teachings remain normative for the urban church.

4. One People

If incarnation is the model and reconciliation is the message of the urban church today, then the reconciled community is the result. Perhaps this is the area where Anabaptism can offer the most distinctive answer to the brokenness and alienation of city-dwellers. As in New Testament times, when the gospel is faithfully proclaimed and lived, it threatens to turn entire cities upside-down. Instead of throngs of jostling, grabbing, fighting people, communities of grace, peace, hope, and joy emerge, expressing genuine love and care. Former enemies embrace. Where there was only rivalry, now there is cooperation.

The church consists of visible groups of redeemed people living out Kingdom ethics. Wherever the gospel is faithfully proclaimed and lived, it creates "Kingdom clusters"—people who are drawn together because of their common Lord and their new life in him. This is one of the surest marks of the Kingdom—the emerging new community. From the moment Jesus called his first disciples, he began a new movement which draws together diverse people and miraculously creates a new unity among them. Ephesians takes on new meaning as racial, economic, and social barriers come down.

The Kingdom cluster becomes the key vehicle for evangelism and church growth in cities today. Instead of sending solo-hero evangelists to conquer the urban frontiers (a strategy modeled on American individualism and the pioneer

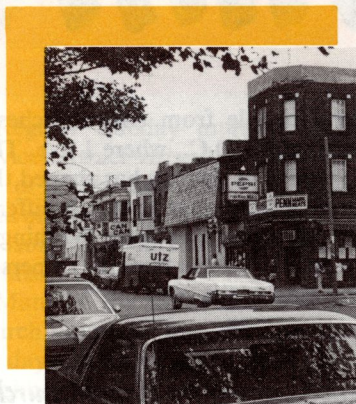


spirit), we should seriously consider sending clusters of people to move into selected areas of the city to both proclaim and demonstrate holistic Christian community in that place. It becomes a micro-community "incarnating" the life of Christ within the larger community. The quality of this common life draws people into Christ's family. As salt, light, and yeast it begins to penetrate the urban social fabric. Of course, if such clusters become "cliquish," as Anabaptist groups easily can, this approach can be a hindrance.

A cluster has many advantages over an individual evangelist. Members can support and encourage each other. If most are employed, that can release one or two members for full-time community evangelism. Professionals in the cluster can offer services, often in underserved areas, and train youth for similar professions. Business persons can begin businesses and create employment for the unemployed. Builders can help restore deteriorating housing and work with neighbors for self-help in housing. Teachers can penetrate the school system. The Christian cluster can work in solidarity with the larger neighborhood for justice, peace, and improved living conditions. Most importantly, as neighbors come to faith in Christ, they can fit into an existing faith community and find all areas of their lives touched by God through his people seven days a week, not only on Sunday mornings.

As clusters grow spiritually and numerically, they can send out new clusters to other areas of the city and form a "kingdom network" which eventually impacts the entire city. As in the New Testament, wherever transformed groups meet—in houses, churches, the marketplaces, palaces, or before governors and judges—they create a stir of excitement by modeling alternatives to social norms and demonstrating a power that is authoritative, authentic, and convincing.

As the new network spreads throughout the urban landscape—from inner city to outer city, suburb, and surrounding countryside—redeemed economic and social relationships will become visible. Gifts, resources, learnings, and people can flow in all directions throughout the network in the spirit of 2 Corin-



thians 8 and 9. A new, powerful demonstration of what it means to be one body in Christ will emerge. It would be a fantastic witness to this oneness even if only one-tenth of the Christians in the inner city and the suburbs said, "We are one body, and we will start living that out in concrete ways." Business people in the suburbs could decide to set up businesses in the inner city to help make equal job opportunities truly available. Similar things could be done in education and other fields.

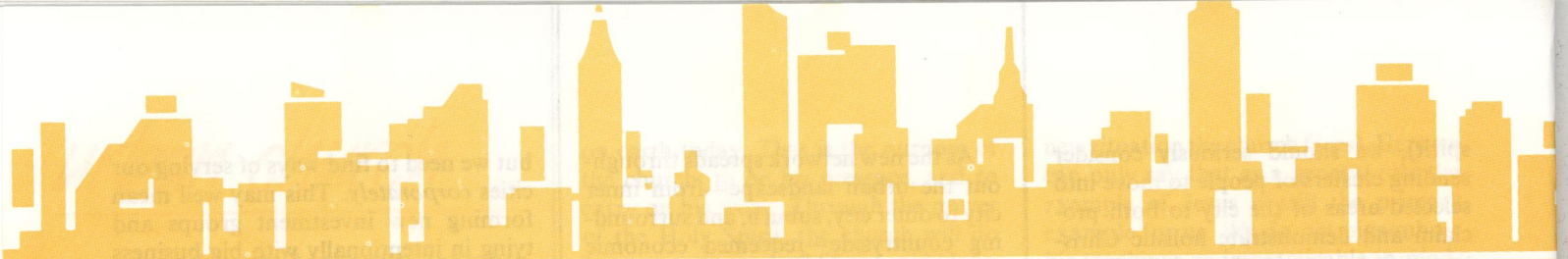
Each community can offer worship, fellowship, and mutual aid—providing stability in transient neighborhoods. But the total network can provide channels of mobility—thus permitting the church to adapt to a very real factor in urbanized society—mobility—with integrity. A more just distribution of resources might be a natural byproduct. Healthy churches already exist in the city, but often they are small and independent, not tied into larger networks reaching beyond their immediate neighborhood.

Modern Anabaptists have learned how to become servants *individually*,

but we need to find ways of serving our cities *corporately*. This may well mean forming new investment groups and tying in intentionally with big business and real estate downtown for the express purpose of reaping some of the generous profits for Kingdom purposes—to benefit the entire city rather than simply make individuals richer and richer. For example, an office tower downtown could provide quality workspace, jobs, and profits to support a high-quality Christian educational complex. The urban Anabaptist will say, "I cannot win the city by myself any more than I can live out the Gospel by myself."

Certainly we do not expect to bring in the millenium by our hard work. That will happen only when Christ returns. But that does not mean that significant change cannot happen now. We should not run and hide in the hills, waiting for his return. Perhaps there might just still be Ninevehs which would repent if enough prophets would dare to confront them. ■

Freeman Miller pastors the Diamond Street Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, Pa., not far from the Temple campus of Messiah College. Among his parishioners are Ron and Arbutus Sider and family. Ron is a member of the faculty of the Eastern Baptist Seminary and chairs the Brethren in Christ Commission on Peace and Social Concerns.—A Meetinghouse article.



WHAT WORKS

What do you think of when you think of the city? It matters a great deal what you think. Your perception of the city probably shapes your image of what church should be like in the city.

In your mind's view, is the city a jungle? Is it a mission field? Or is it homey, filled with your friends? Whatever your viewpoint, or combination of viewpoints, it is crucial to how you might begin to answer the question: What church works in the city?

There are really two questions inside the main question. The first: What church works best *for church members* in the city? The second: What church works best *for the city* itself?

For example, do the church members want their church to minister mostly to themselves? Or mostly to others? What kind of ministry—primarily the soul-saving kind? Or the people-helping kind? Or a mixture? Does the group want to minister together as a church group, or to minister individually? Do the members want their church to be the group upon which they lean in order to survive the city, their ministry-work, and modern life in general?

And then, what about the city's needs? What kind of church works best for the city?

Is the city primarily a place of adventure for you? Is it where you find the biggest cultural and media centers, the biggest churches, the biggest happenings? Or is the city primarily a place of service? Where the bottom-side of society is most visible? Where the poorest of the poor are? Where the greatest pain and suffering is going on?

* * * * *

I tried to find out how some people answer these questions by interviewing

several people from two churches in Washington, D.C., where I live. Their perspective of the city has shaped their church life in ways that are different from other churches in the Washington area perhaps more familiar to persons living outside the city.

The Community House Church.

This is a group of eleven adults and eight children who live within blocks of each other in Northwest Washington's inner-city. Most of the adults are married and in their thirties.

Community House Church itself has no program. Many of the members are working or volunteering in education, health, and housing programs in the city, focusing their energies on people in the city who are down and out.

What pulls the group together? One member, John Swarr, a self-employed carpenter who repairs houses in the neighborhood, said the church is made up of people who are "trying to bring good news to the bad situation" of the city.

"We're so overwhelmed with the needs we see around us, in our jobs and in the programs we volunteer with, that . . . in a way, we come creeping together as church to ask God to enable us to go back out again."

The church began in early 1976 when several families, mostly made up of Mennonites, began regular Wednesday evening meetings to find fellowship and sharing among their neighbors. Within a year, the group came to see its growing commitment to each other taking the form of a house church; the members loosened their ties to other congregations and began to meet on Sunday mornings to worship.

Today, in some ways, Community

House Church resembles a typical congregation. Regular Sunday morning worship services involve hymn singing and Scripture reading. Stories are told during "children's time." Then a sermon or reflection-presentation is offered, sometimes a guided period of silence. Often at the end of the sermon, a bit of time is reserved for people to respond to the message.

"We want worship to be authentic," explained Swarr. "We don't want to feel like we've got to put on a program so that it can feel like we had church that morning . . . We want to struggle with the faith as we're confronted by it."

Sunday morning attendance has reached as high as 30 people, pushing the limits of a reasonable size for a house church. Members also meet in three small groups during the week for prayer, Bible study, and discussion. A business meeting is held monthly to decide on church issues, like how the church offerings should be allocated.

"There is always a debate over whether domestic needs are more crucial than overseas' needs," recalled Swarr. When the week before you were forced to deny a child placement in your small school (for problem children the public schools have given up on) because of lack of money, or when you know that the same dollars could provide a family you met down the street last week that new window or tank of heating oil they desperately need, it is quite painful to decide to send money out of town to some other more distant cause. Yet, even with these immediate needs in their neighborhood, and despite the members' low incomes, the church raises between \$10,000 and \$12,000 in offerings each year and sends about half of that money through Eastern Mennonite Board or Mennonite Central Committee to needs in other countries.



in the CITY

The group came about because people were seeking deeply shared relationships and support, said Swarr. "For me, the Christian faith is very important for why I'm here. The city, being so large, impersonal and mobile, demands that I be a part of something which knows me well enough to minister to my needs and shore me back up."

The Community of Hope.

This church is a mission effort of the church of the Nazarene. Seven years ago, the church was planted by area Nazarenes in the middle of one of the "worst" parts of black Washington, D.C., a neighborhood full of very poor people trying to survive among partially abandoned houses, drug dealers, and the remains of the 1968 riots near 14th Street.

The aim of the church planters was to establish a "ministry of presence," explained Mary Curran, a seminary graduate and Community of Hope worker who is supported by her home church in Portland.

The Community of Hope operates four social service programs with a combined annual budget of more than half a million dollars. A health clinic offers low cost or free medical services to poor people in the neighborhood. A law clinic provides legal assistance. The housing program helps to shelter poor families, and organizes tenants to compel corrupt landlords to provide the basics of heat and hot water and minimal upkeep. The children's program works with neighborhood kids, planning after-school activities, trips, tutoring, and religious instruction programs.

"We are discovering Christ, as Mother Theresa puts it, 'In the distressing disguise of the poor,'" said Tom Nees, pastor and director of the Community.

Regular Sunday morning worship services attract virtually an equal number of blacks and whites, generally a total of more than 75 people. Black gospel songs are mixed in between old hymns.

Many of the white members of the church commute into the area during the day and weekends to work with the neighborhood people. Some, like Mary Curran, live on the block itself.

"Even though I live at a lot lower level than I have ever before in my life, it is still optional for me," said Curran. "Neighborhood people know I am here just because I want to be and can leave any time and go back to upper-middle class. It takes a while for people to forget that about me, and to feel that I'm just another person in the neighborhood and can really understand what it means that they don't have food for their kids tonight."

The church is divided into four "mission groups" that support and staff the four ministries of the congregation. Members pledge to pray for each other by name each day, meditate half an hour each day, pray and study the Bible half an hour daily, write in a personal journal each day, and relate to a spiritual director at least one hour per week. The mission groups meet weekly to fellowship and worship as well as make decisions about the ministries.

"We are trying to build real close relationships with the people in the neighborhood through our involvement in the ministries," said Curran. "People are usually so overwhelmed with the need they have . . . that they are not interested in the four spiritual laws or whatever, they're interested in getting their problem taken care of. We try to do that in a way that lets them know that we are not only interested in the problem but are interested in what's going on in their life,

so that they feel free to come again. . . .

"As far as directly sharing Christ verbally with them, that comes later; it might never come. I guess our major emphasis would be to just be Christ to people, to be as compassionate, caring, and gentle as we can."

There is another side to Community of Hope's sense of mission—it tries to raise the social consciousness of Nazarene and other churches outside the city. But Curran described that ministry as very difficult. People out there "don't have any perception of what's really happening in this city, which means they can't perceive adequately of what we're here to do."

The work ethic that permeates the church at large seems to insist that poor people in her neighborhood could get a job if they really wanted one, she said. "But I know for a fact that not everyone here can get a job. You just listen to the kids and they're all the time hustling for work . . . unemployment in D.C. for black men between the ages of 15 and 35 is over 50 per cent. They had a construction job nearby and they were going to hire 15 guys for general labor, mixing cement and that kind of thing, and they had over 1,100 guys apply."

These two church groups, Community House Church and Community of Hope, seem to "work" in the city. Members meet each others' needs through close sharing and commitment. And, they are doing much to meet the needs of at least some of their disadvantaged neighbors. Churches holding to this twin focus are not typical, at least not in Washington, D.C. ■

Phil Baker-Shenk is a law student in Washington, D. C., and is co-author of The Path of Most Resistance (Herald Press, 1982). A Meetinghouse article.



MORE than a MEAL

by Cathy Bert and Phil Byers
as told by Richard Cunningham

Rich Cunningham left the parking lights on as he stepped out of the double-parked station wagon he used for delivering "Meals On Wheels" meals to elderly people. It was about 10:30 a.m. The small street in the Bronx was quiet in comparison to most city streets. Traffic was slight. Further up the block the street was blocked off in front of a school. At the corner a fiftyish man in a blue denim apron and his wife were selling fruit from the side of a truck where a panel was folded down.

From the brown-bricked building in front of him, the music of two stereos was competing for the attention of Rich's ears as he collected the meal he had stopped to deliver. He glanced up at a nearby window where every day he saw a gray-haired woman sitting and watching. Rich offered her his usual friendly wave in hope that it might brighten her day.

Rich crossed the street and sauntered up the stairs to the first floor of the six-story apartment building where Mrs. Roth lived. Standing at her door, he announced his presence with four hard raps—Mrs. Roth knew his knock—and waited for the door to open.

The smell of spicy Spanish food filled the hall and Spanish phrases were heard, hollered over the stereo of Mrs. Roth's neighbors. It was taking her a bit longer than usual to answer the door.

Rich had been working with Meals On Wheels for several months. The job was a part of his voluntary service with the Bronx Community Service Ministries. Meals On Wheels is a social minis-

try coordinated by a Hebrew Center located beside Fellowship Chapel, the Brethren in Christ mission church in Bronx, New York.

Day after day he delivered meals to Mrs. Roth. Every day he learned more about her. Like so many of the people to whom he delivered meals, she would show him family pictures and liked to give him lots of advice. Mrs. Roth needed more than a meal.

She was an independent lady, able to take partial care of herself. She usually came to the door wrapped up in one or two housecoats, the small flowery designs faded from wear. The bulky housecoats covered up her true frailty. She moved very slowly to minimize the pain of her arthritis. She would hold on to the door to steady herself as Rich entered. Rich would walk past her cautiously—she was so frail—and set the meal on her kitchen table where they often talked a bit before Rich would move on.

But today she didn't come after Rich had waited much longer than usual. Rich felt uneasy. He yelled in, "Are you all right?" Through the closed door he heard a shuffling, scraping sound on the floor. It was coming closer to the door. Then he heard Mrs. Roth trying to work the locks. She was breathing heavily from her struggle. It took a long time for Mrs. Roth to unlock and open the door slightly. Rich peeked through the narrow opening; he didn't want to open the door wider, being unsure of where Mrs. Roth was. He saw her lying on the floor, her feet against the door.

"Close the door and back away, Mrs. Roth," Rich said, realizing he couldn't open the door with her in that position. She did, and Rich squeezed through the doorway. "Are you O.K.?" he asked, as he knelt beside her. He could see from a small cut on her wrinkled forehead that she had had an accident.

"I'm O.K." she answered. "I fell off

the couch when I was tying my shoes. I'm so weak; I just couldn't get back up." Her quiet voice expressed her despair over the situation.

"When did this happen?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"You mean you've been on the floor all night?"

"I'm all right. I pulled some covers off the couch to keep warm."

"What do you want me to do? Should I call the ambulance or the hospital?"

She told him to call the hospital. Rich hurried across the cramped apartment and through the bedroom to the phone beside her bed. He dialed 911 and gave the needed information.

They waited together for the ambulance. Rich thought briefly about the other meals he had yet to deliver, but he knew his responsibility at the time was for Mrs. Roth.

Within minutes the ambulance arrived. Rich answered some questions and helped the medics get Mrs. Roth ready to go. Mrs. Roth became a bit irrational; she tried on several scarves, sweaters, and coats. After lying on the floor for some 20 hours, she had become weak from exhaustion and hunger. Two people helped her to her feet and escorted her to the ambulance.

Rich followed the medics to the ambulance. As he walked, he recalled the talks he had had with Mrs. Roth. She told him she had family members living all across the United States, yet they seemed to have no idea how much she needed them at that time. So many of the people he delivered meals to were like Mrs. Roth. Some had housekeepers to help clean, but, in general, they had no close family ties. While these people were free to come and go from their apartments as they liked, for many, these apartments had become prisons—they could not get out because of physical or psychological handicaps. One person Rich delivered meals to had not left his apartment for seven years. For another elderly gentleman, Rich was the only person he saw from Friday morning until Monday morning.

Rich's voluntary service experience has enabled him to bring some sunshine into the darkened lives of several elderly people. He was able to give a word of encouragement and they counted him as a friend—sometimes their only friend. He was able to share Christ with some of the people, praying that the Lord would bring them to a saving knowledge of himself, because "man does not live by bread alone."

Rich Cunningham gave one year of voluntary service at Bronx Community Service Ministries. He is presently continuing his voluntary service at Spring Lake Retreat in New York. Cathy Bert, who interviewed Rich for this story, is community resource person and director of the Little Lighthouse Learning Center.

Religion in Review

EP News Service
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by Gene Kucharsky

This was the year that the pope finally had a good word for Luther.

It was the Year of the Bible in America.

It was the year that U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy paid a friendly visit to Jerry Falwell and Liberty Baptist College.

And it was the year of the Cabbage Patch Kids, those ugly but uniquely lovable dolls that with the help of some shrewd marketing captured the hearts of the American consumers.

It was also the year in which the United States climbed out of an economic recession. And the year of Billy Graham's 65th birthday. And the year in which the National Council of Churches turned aside a membership bid from a denomination known for its approval of homosexuality. And it was the year before 1984.

During the early part of the year religion reportage was dominated by the debate over nuclear weapons. American Roman Catholic bishops gave final approval to a pastoral letter which argues that no end can justify the indiscriminate killing that a nuclear conflict renders inevitable. An impressively broad spectrum of evangelical leaders came together to compare views on the propriety of nuclear armaments, but did not attempt to reach a consensus.

For the rest of the year the focus shifted largely to Martin Luther. More books have been written about Luther than about anyone else except Jesus Christ, and the 500th anniversary of the birth of the Reformer called new attention to all he stood for.

A group of Lutheran and Roman Catholic scholars took the occasion to announce that they had reached essential agreement on the meaning of justifi-

cation. "We can and do confess together," they said in a joint statement, "that our hope for salvation rests entirely on God's merciful action in Christ."

Pope John Paul II, in the first papal statement on Luther since the German Augustinian monk was excommunicated in 1521, praised his "profound religiousness." The pontiff cited recent research on Luther which enables Roman Catholics to view him in a better light.

Publication of the statement, contained in a letter to Dutch Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity, coincided with the disclosure that John Paul would preach at a Lutheran church in Rome. Further conciliatory moves seemed likely in the months ahead.

From developments like these it might be inferred that Christians are drawing closer together and communicating with each other more effectively than before. But during 1983 there was at least one major continuing phenomenon suggesting that such is not the case. An avalanche of mail continued to pour into the offices of the Federal Communications Commission in Washington protesting a non-existent threat to religious broadcasting. The letter-writing campaign cites a petition filed with the FCC and subsequently dismissed. Even though the case was closed several years ago, the complaints from well-meaning Christians persist.

An FCC spokesperson said at the end

A look at what made news from the religious perspective shows more than the usual variety of noteworthy events and trends in 1983.

Gene Kucharsky, veteran reporter of the religious scene, is editor of *Christian Herald* magazine. He also serves as secretary of the EPA Board of Directors.

of November that it was still getting an average of more than 130,000 letters per month and that the total to date was up to 14,732,531. Christian publications and radio and television stations have carried repeated stories to the effect that the whole thing is a hoax. Madalyn Murray O'Hair is commonly identified as the instigator of the threat (she was never involved in the petition in any way).

Actually, the electronic church is just getting its second wind in the United States. Dr. Ben Armstrong, executive director of National Religious Broadcasters, said in a recent *Christian Herald* interview that in the period from 1977 to 1982 there was a slowing down in the progress of Christian radio and television, "apparently in direct proportion to the economic recession." He added, however, that the 1984 *Directory of Religious Broadcasting* shows a 20 percent increase in the number of programs and in the number of stations airing religious programs.

Financial recovery may also make it possible for evangelical missionary work to surge ahead. A surprising number of missionary organizations came through the lean months quite well, according to Dr. Wade Coggins, executive director of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association. "While feeling some pressure during the recent recession, most missions have avoided cutting back and may have actually grown during this period," Coggins told EP News Service.

North American support of Protestant missions is now believed to total more than a billion dollars a year.

Missionary recruitment is also showing encouraging signs. During the 1960's young people lost interest in overseas service. But during the early '70s attitudes began to change, according to Dr. David Howard, who directed the big Inter-Varsity student missionary conventions. And the momentum has been building ever since.

"Now in the '80s a new movement, matched perhaps only by the massive Student Volunteer Movement in the early part of our century, has taken root among Christian students in colleges and seminaries across the country," says Dr. C. Peter Wagner, professor of church growth at Fuller Theological Seminary, in a new book, *On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian*.

next page, please

The U.S. Center for World Mission calculated that there were about 1,362,000,000 Christians in the world in 1983, or about 30 percent of the total population. Of these, some 259 million were judged to be "true Christians" by the USCWM.

David B. Barrett, editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* published by Oxford University Press, believes that each Christian is evangelizing 2.4 times as many non-Christians now than in 1900. (Most data on Christian demographics is currently based on statistics collected by Barrett and by researchers at World Vision.)

A Gallup poll indicated that among adult Americans 18 and older, 13 percent are engaged in witnessing, 9 percent in evangelism, and 8 percent in missionary work. The survey, conducted for Christian Broadcasting Network, concluded "a rising tide of interest and involvement in religion among all levels of society, and particularly among Protestants."

In North America, the burgeoning interest in evangelism has probably been fueled by the ever-expanding Bible study movement. Responders to the Gallup survey mentioned Bible studies more frequently than any other religious activity—26 percent said they participated in Bible studies.

Marilyn Kunz of Neighborhood Bible Studies told EP News Service that "many congregations which until recently were not promoting Bible studies are now seeing them as a necessary facet of church life."

Evangelistic efforts are also being stepped up in other parts of the world. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association gave these efforts a lift last summer when it brought together some 4,000 itinerant evangelists for an intensive 10-day training session in Amsterdam. Most of the participants came from the third world.

The big ecumenical event of 1983 was the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Vancouver, Canada. A broad range of political developments was scrutinized. Western democracies came in for their usual share of severe critiques. The WCC and the National Council of Churches have both come under fire of late for exercising too much restraint in evaluating policies and actions of Communist countries. The NCC also created a contro-

versy when it released a non-sexist lectionary for voluntary, experimental uses in the churches; the collection of Bible readings uses no male pronouns with references to deity and replaces "Son of God" and "Son of Man" with "The Sovereign One."

Church-state conflicts were as prevalent as ever, especially in the United States. Among key developments was a petition by 59 religious leaders asking Congress to ban all research that could alter the genes affecting human heredity, and a decision by the U. S. Supreme Court to revoke the tax-exempt status of Bob Jones University because the school was judged to be guilty of racial discrimination. A bitter dispute in Nebraska centers on the extent to which the government can set requirements for Christian schools.

President Reagan won praise from many evangelicals for proclaiming 1983 as the year of the Bible, but the American Civil Liberties Union and others brought suit charging the action violated the Constitution. Another highlight of his religious involvement was a much-quoted speech to the National Association of Evangelicals annual convention in which he branded the Soviet Union as the "focus of evil" in the modern world.

The Internal Revenue Service said it will eliminate a double tax exemption benefit enjoyed by clergy for many years. They have been allowed to claim part of their salaries as a non-taxable housing allowance as well as counting mortgage interest as a deduction. The change was to have gone into effect during 1983 but has been delayed.

Issues relating to the abortion, evolution, and school prayer were again in the forefront of stories being covered on the church-state news beat. The Reagan

administration abandoned its effort to require notification of parents when federally-funded birth control devices are distributed to teen-agers. It went to court, however, to try to obtain medical records of a deformed infant to determine whether the child's civil rights were being violated. Several states were in litigation over provisions for moments of silence to start the school day.

In a number of countries Christians are experiencing conflicts with governmental authorities which are far more acute than those in the United States. The growing conservative trend in Islam is affecting churches throughout Asia as well as stirring political turmoil. No solution seemed to be in sight for the strife in Northern Ireland, where gunmen invaded a church while a Sunday evening service was in progress, killing and injuring several worshippers. One situation in the Soviet Union was resolved when seven Pentecostals who had taken refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow in 1978 were finally allowed to immigrate to the United States.

Two avowedly evangelical political figures bowed out of the limelight during the year. General Efraim Rios Montt was overthrown as president of Guatemala during a coup, and U.S. Interior Secretary James Watt resigned after making remarks that were widely interpreted as reflecting insensitivity to the plight of minorities.

The churchman who got the most media attention during the year was Rev. Jesse Jackson, who announced that he was seeking the Democratic nomination for President.

The Christian world lost some influential people in death: Frank Gaebelein, noted educator and author; Catherine Marshall LeSourd, best-selling novelist; Ruth Carter Stapleton, known for her ministry of inner healing; Lois Henderson, distinguished writer of biblical fiction; and the beloved Corrie ten Boom, whose protection of Jews during World War II did much to bring continuing Jewish concerns to the attention of the Christian community.

On the ecclesiastical scene, a north-south rift dating back to the Civil War was healed with the merger of the nation's two largest Presbyterian bodies. The new denomination is known as the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Its life may be short, however. The Consultation on Church Union set a goal for the merger of nine major American com-

Evangelical Christians showed fresh awareness of the need of a compassionate spirit in the context of a tense, fear-filled world.

Evangelical Visitor

munions by December 4, 1990, the 30th anniversary of the historic Blake-Pike proposal.

Many other events made a mark upon the religious world during 1983 as the church sought to influence the culture of which it is a part, and some definite progress was evident. Evangelicals pointed to the saving grace offered by the Lord Jesus Christ to all who come to him in faith and repentance. As individual renewal became a reality for more people, society would benefit from their moral turnabouts.

Problems abounded, to be sure. Lack of adequate coordination between Christians, plus a shortage of good leadership and indifference toward leadership, plagued the advance. Yet there were clear strides made by the church and para-church, including increasing recognition of the fact that tensions between the two need more attention.

Books and magazines saw overall gains in acceptance and penetration of potential markets. In the world of thought, Eerdmans introduced an important series of books sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies, developed under the editorial direction of Carl F. H. Henry, and designed to conquer new frontiers in both science and the humanities.

In music, Walt Quinn of Word Records feels that after 20 years of development the new Christian music is finally finding its own original sound identity that can be distinguished from secular hybrids.

In technology, computers made big inroads into the administrative life of churches to free up people for more meaningful ministries.

And despite lingering tendencies toward individualism and introspection, evangelical Christians showed fresh awareness of the increasing need of a compassionate spirit in the context of a tense, fear-filled world. They saw anew the challenge of the hungry, the homeless, the disadvantaged, and the underprivileged.

All in all, it was a better than average year.

In the words of Dr. George Gallup, Jr., "Americans in 1983 appeared to be seeking spiritual fulfillment with a new intensity and with a new sense of urgency." Their concern over world events, he told EP News Service, contributed to a greater reliance upon God. ■

DATEBOOK

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Christian Holiness Convention April 24-26

The Christian Holiness Association will host its 116th annual convention April 24-26, 1984, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Indianapolis, Indiana. The association consists of 17 denominations within the U.S., several overseas affiliates, and 50 educational institutions representing approximately 2 million people.

The theme for this year's convention is "Holiness and the Harvest." Speaking on various facets of the theme will be: Dr. Reuben Welch, chaplain of Point Loma Nazarene College; Dr. Dennis Kinlaw, former president of Asbury College; Dr. Robert Coleman, chairman of the Department of Evangelism and Missions, Trinity Evangelical Seminary; Dr. Thomas H. Hermiz, president of World Gospel Mission; Dr. Tom

Nees, pastor of the Community of Hope Church, Washington, D.C.; and Dr. Clyde Dupin, evangelist of the Wesleyan Church.

A full program of seminars and workshops will be offered those who attend the convention. Selected topics will include: "Holiness and the Ethnic Harvest," "Discipleship and Church Growth," "Personal Preparation for Witness," and "Evangelism through Campmeetings," as well as numerous others.

The convention's centralized location and the convenience of the Hyatt Regency Hotel offer an excellent opportunity for participation. For further information, contact the Christian Holiness Association, P.O. Box 68289, Portland, OR 97268, or phone 503-654-6707.

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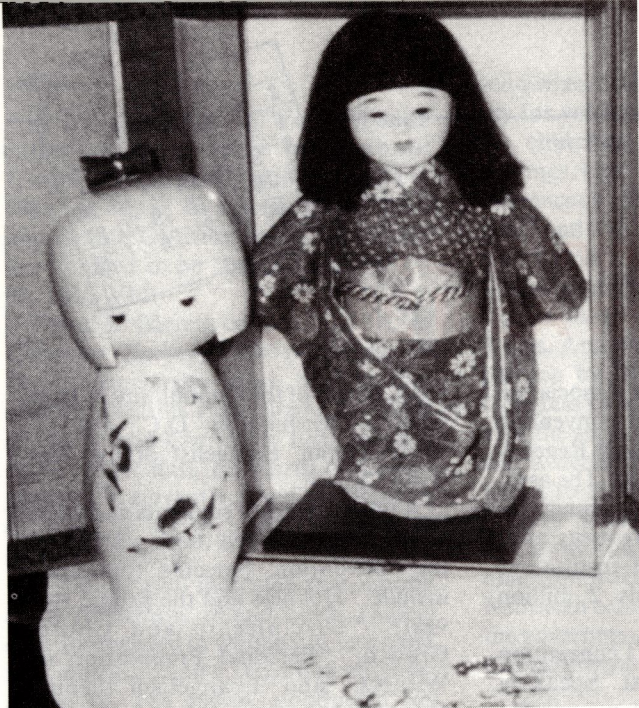
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IMPRESSIONS of JAPAN

by Paul
Hostetler

Part 2

In the December issue I briefly discussed eight impressions which grew out of our recent trip to Japan: (1) We should perhaps say "Nippon" rather than "Japan." (2) Japan is very crowded. (3) Japan is very beautiful. (4) The Japanese work very hard. (5) Foreigners feel very foreign among the Nipponese. (6) The Japanese give their children much freedom. (7) Christianity is a minority religion in Japan. (8) Japan feels friendly toward Western people.

It is very difficult to distill the memories (mostly sweet, but some bitter) into a few pages of numbered impressions, but the former article and this one are an attempt. I will now share a few more.

● **Impression 9:** The Japanese love to give gifts. Since our daughter Karen knew that we would be invited into quite a number of Japanese homes during our visit, she asked us to bring along small gifts to give to our hosts. We did this, but we were totally unprepared for the way the people of Japan lavished gifts upon us. Our "doll experience" is a good illustration.

One evening we were invited out to dinner at the Oya home. As we were being royally entertained, we told Mrs. Oya that we planned to buy a few dolls to take home with us. She immediately made arrangements to take us to some of the best stores in Nagoya the next day. But then, at the end of the meal, she gave us five, large, expensive dolls! We were overwhelmed. The next day we went shopping for dolls, bought a few, and were promptly given three other

dolls, priced much higher at \$90 U.S. each! Even though the dolls were only a part of the many gifts which were pressed upon us by the generous Japanese people, we accumulated a total of 19 dolls, including four very large ones in glass cases. Although we filled large cartons and stuffed our suitcases, we were forced to leave some dolls behind with Dan and Karen.

● **Impression 10:** The food was different, but good. Sitting on the floor at a low Japanese table is very painful for Western bones and muscles. We were awkward, but we managed. And our efforts were always rewarded. We had prepared ourselves ahead of time for the various kinds of raw fish which are eaten in Japan, and to our surprise, most of them were tasty. Sometimes our considerate hosts provided chairs and higher tables for us and served typical American foods along with the local cuisine.

● **Impression 11:** Education is taken very seriously in Japan. School children spend five and a half days in the classroom each week, 11 months of the year. Incredibly, Vaughn had homework during his one-month vacation and needed to report to school two half-days each week.

One of the sobering results from such a strong emphasis on education is the incidence of suicide among the high school youth who fail to make the grade into university. Sometimes even junior high children take their lives rather than face the disappointment of parents, teachers, and peers.

Vaughn and Cam are in Japanese schools, and they have become very proficient in the language. When Dan, who speaks Japanese rather well for his relatively short time in Japan, fails to communicate adequately to a Japanese friend, seven-year-old Vaughn comes to his rescue. As we moved about in public places, it was delightful to see the surprised looks on people's faces when the redheaded *gaijin* (foreigner) spoke in fluent Japanese.

● **Impression 12:** The missionary is very isolated in Nippon. This point has been brought out in various ways in the first 11 impressions, but it seems to me that it must be stated explicitly. There are very few Western people in Japan. Days, even weeks, may go by without the missionary seeing one other Western face.

When the problems of oral communication and the extreme difficulty of written communication are added to that, the experience is painful. After we had visited in the home of a Japanese family, Dan and Karen returned home exhausted from the strain of having a simple conversation.

Certain favorite foods are unavailable there. From the time she was a child, Karen had Wheaties for breakfast. But no more. So we took her a box in our suitcase. I saw her eating a carefully measured small serving one morning, and there was a faraway look in her eyes. We took Dan some "M and M" candies, and he almost shouted for joy. These are but two examples of the many common

The Peace Dome at Hiroshima

foods we enjoy and which they are unable to get.

I recall that Pete and Mary Willms, pioneer Brethren in Christ missionaries in Japan, once told us that their children (who also went to Japanese schools and who also became fluent in Japanese) were embarrassed by the broken Japanese spoken by their parents. I watched Vaughn one day as he observed his father struggling to express himself in the difficult new language. It seemed to me that the lad was a bit ashamed of him.

A lot of people have talked to me about the article I wrote for the *Evangelical Visitor* soon after the Deyhles left for Japan. I frankly admitted finding it difficult to let them go. Most people who read the piece were affirming, including many missionaries. A few people were surprised that I was not more consecrated to the Lord's will.

Well, I was becoming reluctantly accustomed to doing without these four people, but now I am back to square one. When I said goodbye at the Tokyo Airport, I felt like a deserter because now I was much more aware of the painful isolation which they and other missionaries must feel. My anguish of separation is deeper than ever; hopefully my prayers will be more effective.

● **Impression 13:** Missionaries need to exercise careful discipline. After breakfast on our first morning in Japan, Dan and Karen suggested that we spend our devotional time together each day by reading through *Living with Jesus Today* by Juan Ortiz. Frankly, we vacationers were minded to cut devotions a bit short because there was so much to see and so little time. But our children



showed us the way to needed discipline.

As we started through the book, a chapter or two a day, we gained new insights on the marvelous truth that God's Spirit is always within us. We read, discussed, argued, laughed, cried, and prayed together, quickly filling in more than an hour each day. As we shared in this way for the last time, we agreed that the most exciting thing that happened to us in Japan was these devotional times. Unfortunately, the boys were bored.

● **Impression 14:** "War is hell," whether at Pearl Harbor or at Hiroshima. It was our privilege to visit both places, marking the beginning and ending of the American war with Japan. I well remember Sunday, December 7, 1941, when the Nipponese attacked Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. More than 2,000 servicemen lost their lives that day, half of them on the battleship Arizona, which exploded and sank in minutes, taking all on board to a watery grave.

Franklin Roosevelt, President of the United States at the time, called December 7 "a date which will live in infamy." And indeed it has. As we visited the memorial built over the Arizona, read plaques, browsed through the museum, and viewed films, the point was emphatically made that the Japanese destruction of 2,000 military personnel was an atrocity beyond all reason.

We also stood at the place of a big explosion in Hiroshima. A small brass plate marks the center of the destruction. As we looked at it, we mourned for

the 300,000 Japanese of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (at least half were women and children) who died in that blinding atomic flash and in the horrible agony which followed in the next few days.

We visited the Peace Dome and the large Children's Monument. The latter was almost covered with thousands of wreaths, and we were told that it is always so. It was a very hot day, and we were most uncomfortable. Then we visited the museum and the park which marks the central area of the devastation. We became reminded that, on the other August day, the searing heat was so intense that it burned stone. The heat we felt became bearable.

● **Impression 15:** Japanese congregations are small. While in Japan, we visited three different churches for the Sunday morning worship service. The first one was in Karuizawa, and was founded by TEAM missions, the agency whose language school Dan and Karen attended during their first year in Japan. It happened to be the congregation's 25th anniversary, and they were celebrating. It was an inspiring service, but the total crowd was under 50. Dan told us afterward that very few churches in Japan have more than 50 in attendance in Sunday services.

We were in Tokyo on our second Sunday, and chose to attend the Nukui Church, where Mr. Hashimoto is the pastor. About 40 were present—a good crowd. We met the Hallelujah Lady who attended one of our General Con-

next page, please

We agreed that the most exciting thing that happened to us in Japan was the morning devotional time with Dan and Karen.



Lessons from a Logo

The people of the Brethren in Christ Church are anticipating a special event in 1984—the 108th session of our General Conference. In order for us to quickly catch the theme, “Living as Christ’s Family,” the Program Commission asked an artist to design the logo you see here.

Note several different aspects of this symbol:

(a) The symbol includes a number of family members who are standing arm in arm. Observe that they are all the same, because in Christ the lines and barriers that often divide us—age, size, race, sex, color, status—are erased.

(b) The circle symbolizes the unity of the Christian family. We are truly “one in the Lord.”

(c) The straight lines toward the middle represent the truth of the cross which should be central to, and in the midst of, the Christian family.

(d) The circle is complete, yet it is not closed. This reminds us that we must always have outstretched arms to share the Good News and to bring others into the circle of Christ’s family. Note that one enters Christ’s family circle at the foot of the cross.

(e) The word “Christ” is in the very center of everything, as it must be for the true family of God. The first word, “Living,” suggests the dynamic, continuing action of a family that is in one sense all the same, but on the other hand is ever changing because of Christ’s call for us to be his people.

Also enclosed in the symbol is the passage of Scripture—Ephesians—which is the basis of our theme.

We hope that in the coming months, as you receive materials and read articles which carry this symbol, you will be reminded to pray for and plan to be a part of this great event.

Bishop Don Shafer

Moderator of the 1984 General Conference

ferences. We sat through the service with everything done in Japanese. Since the hymn tunes were familiar, we surmounted the language barrier by singing in English and Japanese respectively. God met all our needs as we came to him in love and obedience.

On our final Sunday in Japan, we worshiped with the Nagoya group. Dan and Karen, John Graybill, and the local Japanese leader, Mr. Sugata, went all out to publicize the fact that a *gaijin* from America would be speaking. Thirty-five people attended, by far the largest number ever, including first-time

people—one doctor and his family. I preached and John interpreted. After the service, almost everyone stayed for the noon meal which was possible only because Lucille Graybill was out of bed in the wee hours getting it ready. Both the service and the meal fellowship were deeply moving to us.

● **Impression 16:** Missionary work in Japan is difficult, but rewarding. Shortly before leaving Japan we sat in a restaurant in Nagoya with John and Lucille. John drew me a pyramid with seven levels. The base he labeled “contacts,”

and the next six levels were: friends, students, seekers, decisions, baptisms, and disciple. No, that last word is *not* supposed to be plural. The number at the friends level was 40; the number at the disciple level was a lonely one.

What a challenge! What a potential for discouragement! But our missionaries are planning their work and working their plan. We met a good number of Japanese who are at the friend-student-seeker levels.

I would like to quote a paragraph from the most recent newsletter Dan and Karen sent out. “The last three months may represent a turning point in our work here,” Dan says. “It may be only our perception, but it seems that many walls are beginning to crumble. I sense that communication is moving beyond words and our hearts are speaking to each other. I believe that the Spirit is facilitating this new depth of communication. The bridges that we have sought to build seem to be getting us somewhere.”

Let us join in a mighty prayer effort that these dear Japanese people will move on to decisions, and baptism, and discipleship in the infant Nagoya congregation. ■



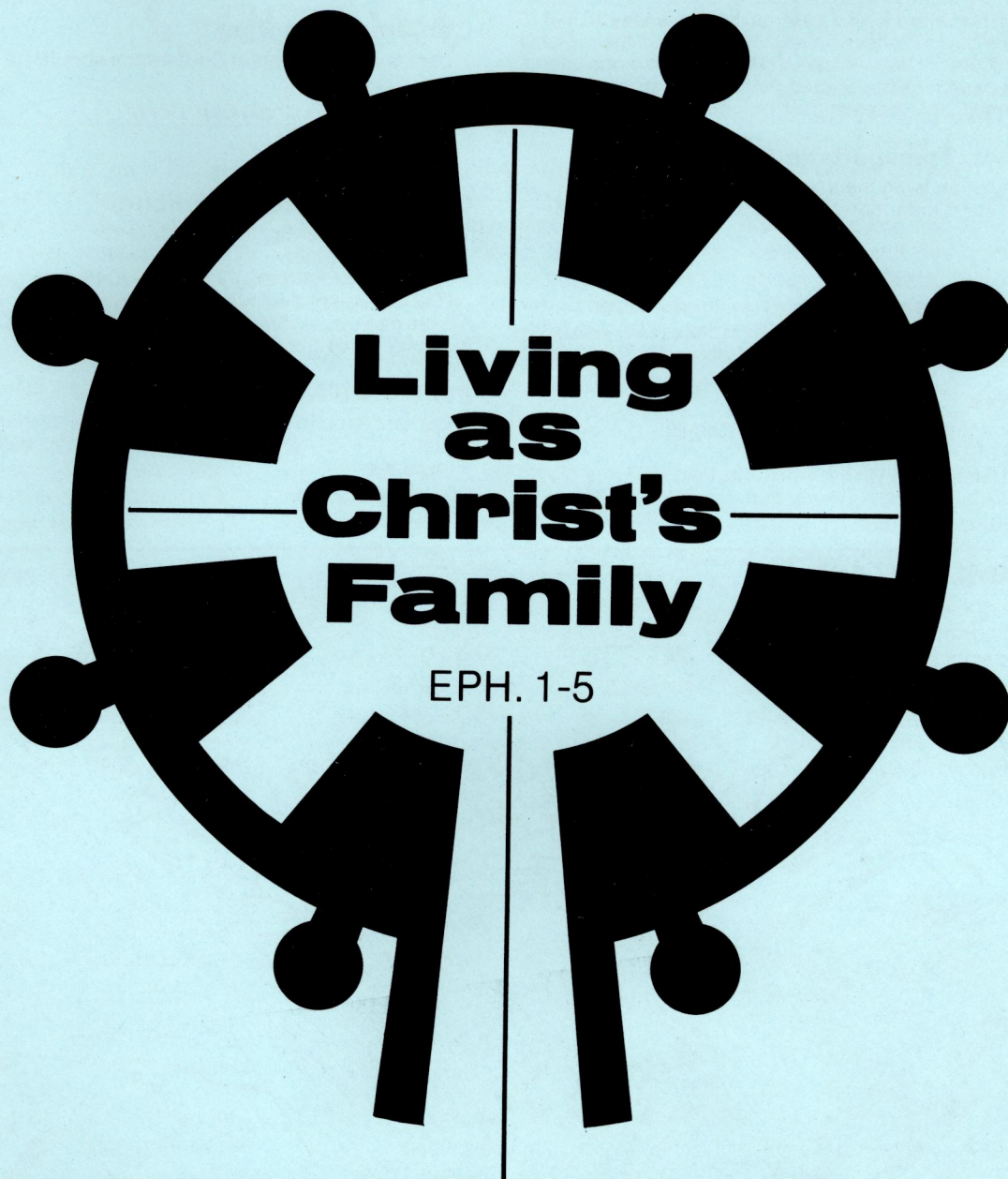
Part of the group together for worship in the Nukui church.

Paul and Lela Hostetler, both on the staff of Messiah College, have a slide presentation of their trip to Japan. For more information, write to Paul at Grantham, PA 17027.

Evangelical Visitor

Attend the One Hundred Eighth
Brethren in Christ

GENERAL CONFERENCE



Dates: Saturday, June 30, 1 PM, through
Thursday noon, July 5, 1984

Place: Messiah College, Grantham, PA 17027

**All persons attending General Conference will need to
complete and send in a registration form before May 20, 1984**

General Conference – A Church-Wide Fellowship for every member of the family
Get a reply form from the January issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* or from your pastor.

Registration Information

If you plan to attend General Conference (and/or the Missions Conference preceding General Conference) at Messiah College, **please fill in the attached form regardless of where or with whom you plan to stay.** This includes those staying in their own homes. Kindly return one form for **each** man, woman, and child, **postmarked before May 20, 1984.** You can get additional forms from your pastor, or you can simply make photocopies.

The registration fee for all people 18 years of age and older, **if your registration form is mailed with a postmark before May 20,** is \$16 per person, or \$4 a day, whichever is less. After May 20 the registration amount is \$20, or \$5 a day, whichever is less. All persons attending day sessions or workshops should pay this registration fee. All charges for General Conference should be paid in U.S. funds.

Lodging, Meals, Transportation

Complete information is on the attached registration form. Those who wish to stay in an area motel or campsite can contact one of the following:

Area Motels

Audubon Motel (717) 766-9006	Thrift Travel Inn (717) 697-5216
Penn Motel (717) 766-4728	Nesbit's Motel (717) 432-3651
Plantation Inn (717) 766-0238	Range Motel (717) 432-9766

Area Campsites

Young's Grove (4 miles away), 612 Range End Rd., Dillsburg, PA 17019, (717) 432-3514.

Sunset Acres (10 miles away), R. 1, Wellsville, PA 17365, (717) 432-4666.

Registration After Arrival

The registration times after you have arrived at General Conference are: Friday, June 29, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.; and Saturday, June 30, 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The registration will include: getting a name tag and convention packet, registering for General Conference membership receiving room assignments and meal tickets, choosing a workshop, selecting a place of worship for Sunday morning (transportation provided), and registering for youth activities, special meal meetings, and other events.

Conference Address

Letters sent to General Conference should be addressed:

(Name of person)
c/o Brethren in Christ Gen. Conf.
Messiah College
Grantham, PA 17027

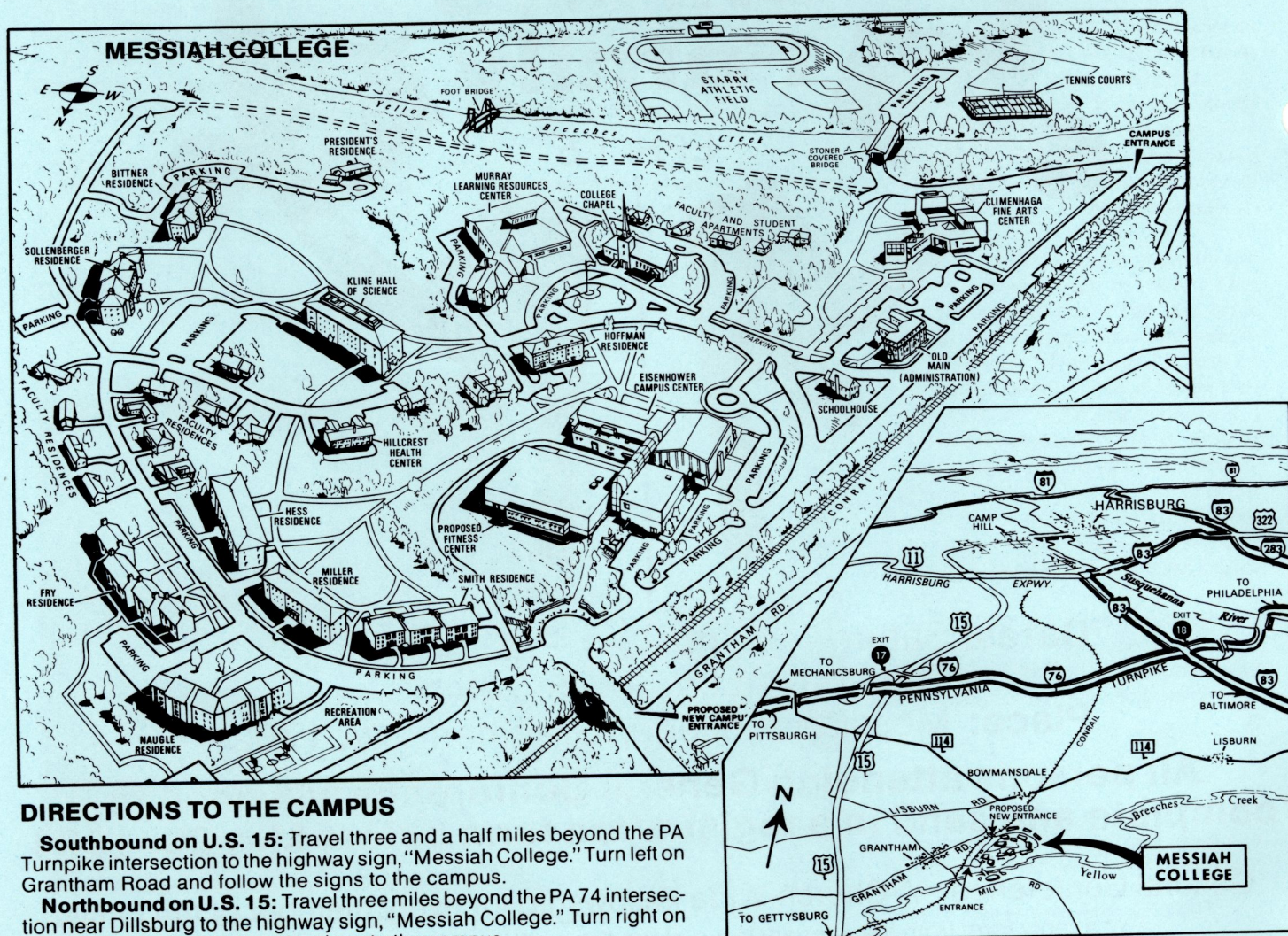
Conference Phone Numbers

Information Booth: (717) 697-7192
General Secretary: (717) 697-7168
Auditorium Platform: (717) 697-7048

(The college phone number, to be used only in emergencies when no one can be reached at the above numbers, is (717) 766-2515. Ask for Conference Services.)

For More Information

Contact Paul Hostetter, Convention Director, Grantham, PA 17027; or call (717) 766-2621. If no answer, call (717) 766-8914 and leave a message.



DIRECTIONS TO THE CAMPUS

Southbound on U.S. 15: Travel three and a half miles beyond the PA Turnpike intersection to the highway sign, "Messiah College." Turn left on Grantham Road and follow the signs to the campus.

Northbound on U.S. 15: Travel three miles beyond the PA 74 intersection near Dillsburg to the highway sign, "Messiah College." Turn right on Grantham Road and follow the signs to the campus.

JoJo's got "Good News"

by Phyllis Engle

"Good News Club is on." The sign hangs on the door of the house where JoJo and Petrinah Sidambi live at Kalundu Primary School in rural Zambia. It is a warm Sunday afternoon. Inside the house nearly 20 cheerful children cover the floor of the living room, singing lustily their favorite gospel songs. After singing, JoJo and Petrinah begin the Bible lesson. The room that echoed with joyous voices has become silent as the children listen attentively. Even some of the mothers have come to hear the lessons being taught this term from the book of Genesis.

JoJo and Petrinah are missionaries of a sort. Assigned to teach in a rural area where there are no other Christians, the Sidambis are offering Good News Clubs as a way to make Christ known in their new environment. JoJo's enthusiasm for ministering through Good News Clubs was a result of his involvement with the club I taught while he was attending David Livingstone Teachers' College (DLTC).

JoJo enrolled at DLTC in May 1980. Having a very outgoing personality, he soon made himself acquainted with Lois Jean Sider and me. He introduced himself as a fellow Brethren in Christ.

During his two years of training, he often came to our house for counsel and prayer. He told us he had become a Christian just before starting high school. In school he was a Christian leader, often conducting church services for the Brethren in Christ students. Following high school he went into National Service for 20 months. By this time, his faith was not as strong as it had been earlier. Soon after coming to college, he made a new commitment to the Lord.

Phyllis Engle is the librarian at David Livingstone Teachers' College. Her love for the gospel, the Zambian people, and children has led her to minister through Good News Clubs. By training others, Phyllis' ministry is reaching far beyond the Livingstone area.

JoJo threw himself wholeheartedly into college life. Aside from assisting in Good News Club, he was elected chairman of the Brethren in Christ students in the college. He also taught Sunday school and sang in the choir for awhile.

While at DLTC, JoJo developed severe pains in his side. After repeated visits to the doctor, he received no relief. One day, while in bed, he read from Proverbs 3:5, 6. He thought, "If I trust the Lord and have someone pray for me, I can be healed." He got out of bed and came to our house. We prayed for his pain to be removed. JoJo left with good news to share. He was completely healed.

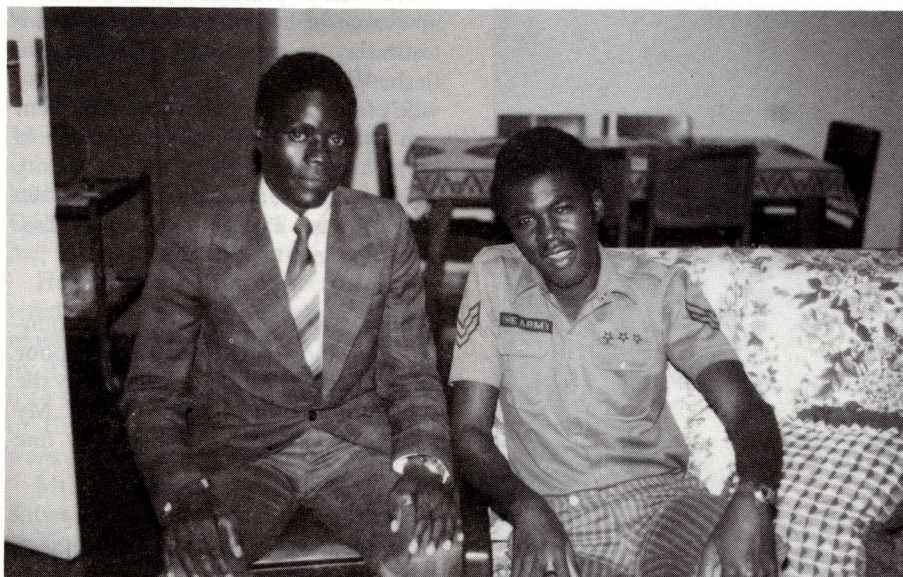
JoJo had another physical problem—a perforated eardrum. It was decided surgery should be performed. Again we took his need to the Lord. The surgeon, a non-Christian, recognized God's hand in the successful operation. Of the three people who underwent the same surgery at that time, JoJo's was the only successful one.

During this time of physical blessing, the Lord was also bringing spiritual blessings into JoJo's life. He was studying to become an elementary teacher, but he was also becoming burdened for the spiritual needs of the children he would teach. For most of his two years in college, he worked with the Good News Club. There he learned how to teach the Bible and bring children to a decision to accept Christ.

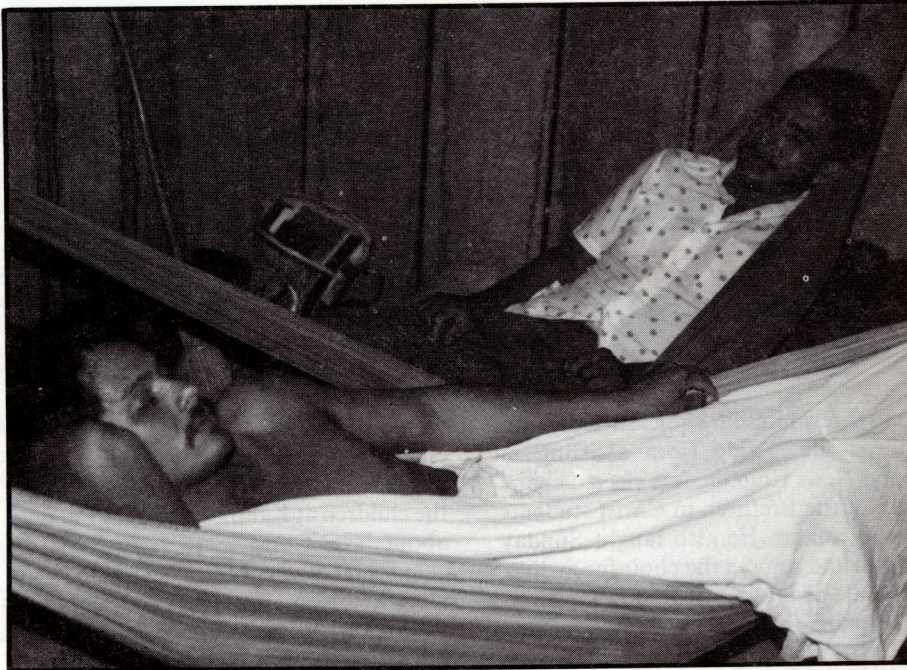
As graduation time approached, I encouraged him to think about beginning Good News Clubs wherever he would be sent to teach. He accepted the challenge and for the past year and a half, he and Petrinah have been teaching the children at Kalundu Primary School about Jesus Christ.

It hasn't always been easy for JoJo to work in this environment. The people in the area where he teaches are not much interested in spiritual things. Excess use of alcohol is prevalent in the community. The Sidambis haven't found other Christians with whom to fellowship. At one point, due to a disagreement between Petrinah and another teacher's wife, the children of that teacher were forbidden to attend club anymore. The Lord overruled and the children were allowed to return after a few weeks. A number of children have accepted Jesus as their Savior as the Sidambis have presented the gospel week after week.

JoJo is now in the process of trying to get a Sunday school started when he gets permission from the proper authorities. He is determined to share his Good News.



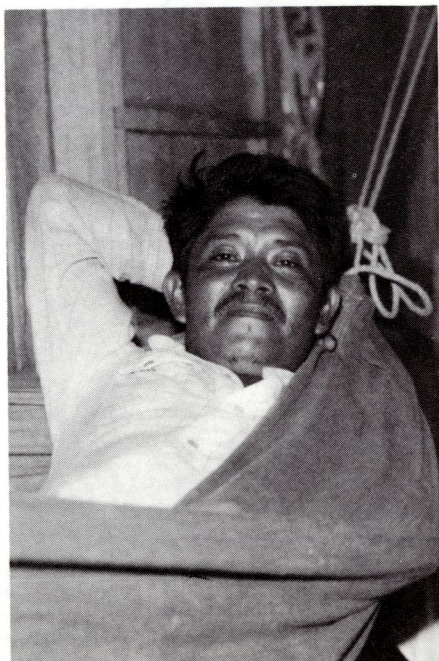
JoJo Sidambi, left, helped with Good News Clubs the two years he was at DLTC. Guydon Makani, right, graduated from DLTC more recently and has started a club where he is teaching, near Macha Mission.



Gleanings in the dark

by Marshall Poe

At the bimonthly pastors' studies in Zelaya, the 15 to 20 participating pastors usually all sleep in the church building at Huapi. Most travel with hammocks which they string up in the church at night while a few of the light travelers just sleep on the church benches or on the floor. Since sleep does not always come easily in such conditions, conversations and singing in the dark can carry on for hours. I have learned a lot about my brothers in the late night hours just by listening.



JAMES: When I was Roman Catholic, I was very faithful. On the holy days for the various saints we honored, I always prepared some kind of feast for them. And I never did any manual labor on feast days. Even though I was faithful to my religion and beliefs, they didn't really affect my life very much. One night at a fiesta, I fought with another young man. We both had machetes and I managed to strike him several times. One cut was so bad that he bled to death. Of course, I had to flee for my life and hide for a few days until his family cooled down. It's terrible to think that I did that.

It's been 14 years now since I became an evangelical. That was because of the testimony of my own brother in the flesh. When I accepted the gospel, my wife's family told me never to visit them and especially never to try to preach to them. I marvel to think that all of my wife's relatives, who number over 100 persons, are evangelicals now. How good and great is our God!

LINO: My brother, I need your counsel. You know that I am old and poor and can't read. I am married now by the civil authorities and by the church. My wife is young and we have only one

Most of the pastors bring hammocks which they string up over the benches in the church at night. Others, who "travel light," just sleep on the benches or on the floor.

child. I don't feel we should have more children because I can't support them. Before I became a Christian, I was terrible. I lived with several women and have seven children from these various unions. I try to help to provide for these children, too. I don't know if it's fair to my young wife for her not to have more children. Sometimes I think I should annul my marriage and send her back to her family. If I stay with her, I wonder if it's wrong to practice birth control. What do you say? What is God's will for me?



GABRIEL: God is so good. You know I came to this seminar one day late. I was waiting with others by the river for the boat. All the others were permitted to board except me. I didn't know then why the boat driver wouldn't accept me. The next day, coming up river in another boat, the people said, "Here by this hill is where a boat turned over yesterday. All the cargo was lost and two men drowned. They are still searching for their bodies." Then I knew why I was left. God was watching over me.

VANCE: During the time I was courting, my wife's mother didn't care for me at all. Even though I was a traveling lay-priest in the Catholic Church, I had a hot temper and was very quarrelsome. So I know she had reason for not wanting me to marry her daughter. She, as well as a lot of the other relatives, didn't come to our wedding. But I really loved my wife, as I still do, and I treated her very well. After a few months of marriage, my mother-in-law came to

pay us a visit. That visit became extended so that now, nine years later, she is still living with us. She says I'm her favorite son-in-law and today she treats me as a real son. Of course, since we both are now evangelicals, our relationship is even better. Just last year she called me aside and asked forgiveness for her attitude against me nine years ago.

While my wife's family didn't like me earlier because of my proud spirit, their attitudes became worse when we became evangelicals. A brother-in-law said I was crazy and he left home to go far away and live in peace where there weren't evangelicals. Just a few months ago he wrote to say that he, his wife, and his children had become evangelicals where they are living. One can run away from the family but he can't escape the Spirit of God.

JACOB: I worked hard as a lay-priest for several years. I came to accept the gospel during my priesthood and

explained my new beliefs to my superiors. They weren't very understanding. The following Sunday, when I went to the chapel which I had worked hard to help build with my own hands and resources, I wasn't allowed to join in the Mass. That was hard for me to accept. I stayed at the back and they said that because I didn't accept the crucifix, the images, and the Virgin, I wasn't welcome. It was clear they didn't like evangelicals. At the same time, the congregation was having trouble because committee members and counselors weren't attending the services and others were becoming evangelicals. I guess the leaders were under a lot of pressure themselves. But I believe God was in my leaving, and now I'm really satisfied with my work and responsibility with the Brethren in Christ Church. ■

Marshall Poe and his wife Eleanor have been serving the Brethren in Christ Church in Nicaragua since 1981. They are doing pastoral leadership training under the direction of Nicaraguan church leaders.

Brethren in Christ hold first Bible conference in Copperbelt

by Miriam Stern

Anticipation electrified the air as plans were made for a weekend Bible conference September 16-18, 1983, bringing the Copperbelt Brethren in Christ people together for the first time. The planning committee felt rewarded as vanloads of people rolled into the Itimpi Campgrounds on Friday evening. They came from Ndola, Kitwe, Mufulira and a contingent of guests from Choma.

After a quick plate of *nsima* and relish, we gathered for worship. How that group sang the Citonga hymns of their mother province! It was almost as good as being home!

It was our first time to meet some of the Copperbelt church body and perhaps we did not expect much. We were reminded that at Fuller School of World Missions we learned that wherever you go to work for the Lord, remember that God was already there before you. Yes, God had been at work in this part of Zambia as was evidenced on Saturday when 15 adults entered a small nearby stream to testify through baptism that they now belong to Jesus. Zambian church planter, George Hansumo, performed the baptismal rites with loving

sympathy. One married couple typified many others who had church roots but never made the step of really accepting Christ in a personal way—until now. Seed was sown (maybe in a primary school), someone else watered (perhaps in another denomination), and now we harvest. All the while God was causing the increase. This can be considered a plus factor in institutional missions.

Attendance ranged from 60 to 70. Many had almost forgotten what the church stood for, but were so willing to learn and be warmed at renewal fires. One brother said, "You'll have to help me; I haven't washed feet since 1958."

Hearts were stirred as sermons centered much on how a clean heart is a requirement for belonging to God's family. Two morning meditations on prayer by a student of the Theological College of Central Africa, Dennis Mweetwa, were probing and meaningful.

Mr. J. Simuusa, chairman of the Kitwe congregation, farewelled in preparation for his overseas study leave of one year. He mentioned that he had already written the Moyos in London in anticipation of fellowship at the Interna-

tional Fellowship center. We were gladened at the sense of belonging he felt with parts of the global family he didn't yet know.

The newly elected Provincial Committee chairman, Mr. W. Shambweka, is a recently warmed church member (from Holland's last visit) and dates his baptism to Anna Kettering's day at Kafue Secondary School. A sharp businessman, he takes the emerging church processes seriously. He replaces Mr. Ammon Mweetwa who was transferred to Livingstone.

In the concluding service on Sunday, following a beautiful communion service, Bishop Silungwe very fittingly admonished the group to meet often as mutual encouragement has a similar benefit to the way logs depend on each other to create a good fire under our cooking pots.

Was the weekend worth the money and effort? A hundred times "Yes." We sense a cementing process at work in which the people feel themselves coming together as a solid unit, becoming more prepared to tackle the big task of reaching out for Christ on the Copperbelt—even beyond the Batonga. ■

Mim Stern and Ira, "Pete," her husband, are working with the Zambian church doing urban church planting in Zambia's Copperbelt.

Ready for more cooperation, but not for merger

by Don Ratzlaff

The heads of the four largest households in the Mennonite/Brethren in Christ community of faith agree that their families are closely related with a lot in common, that they really should do more of their chores together, and that maybe a block party would be nice in the future. But for now, they'd prefer to keep living in separate houses, thank you.

Similarities in perspective and challenges, more cooperation in programming and celebration, but apprehension about trends toward merger were all key items discussed at the Council of Moderators and Secretaries (CMS) annual meeting in Denver, Colo., Nov. 4. The council is made up of leaders from the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ.

The leaders spoke almost as one when reporting the issues facing their respective groups. Confrontations on various levels over theological differences within each group was such a common theme in their reports that one participant noted wryly that the differences *within* the four groups seemed almost more pronounced than those *between* them.

Ross Bender, representing the Mennonite Church, wondered whether someday the existing theological pluralism might not result in "a new convergence of alliances that won't look like the old denominations." Still, he added, the presence of differing views should serve to enrich each denomination, not threaten them. "We have a lot to contribute to each other."

A second common theme was the sensitive issue of Canada-U.S. relationships within the binational denominations. Nick Rempel, representing Mennonite Brethren, described the current "identity crisis" of U.S. Mennonite Brethren. Their role in relation to their Canadian counterparts has changed since the time when it was larger and more dominant. At the present, he said, "we don't quite know how to play ball."

Jacob Fransen, a Canadian leader among the General Conference Mennonites, said his denomination would do well to learn from the current situation of the Mennonite Brethren so as "not to be emphasizing nationalism to

the point where brotherhood falls by the wayside."

The moderators and secretaries considered a revised purpose and organizational statement that would more clearly outline their task as a body. They tentatively agreed to an eight-fold purpose: to fellowship with and encourage each other; to discuss theological concerns; to share mutual burdens; to learn from the success and failures of other groups; to give general guidance to inter-Mennonite cooperative ventures; to monitor lines of accountability of existing inter-Mennonite agencies; to facilitate the assembling of agencies and constituencies for fellowship and learning; and to encourage a new world partnership in the mission of the church.

With inter-Mennonite cooperation as its umbrella concern, the council discussed several ways in which their respective groups could come together, and even composed a timetable. Heading the list was a major evangelism event already in the works for 1985; a second consultation on inter-Mennonite relationships tentatively proposed for 1987; and possibly a joint celebration gathering in 1989.

A steering committee has been selected for the evangelism event, which will have three main thrusts: inspiration, instruction and implementation. A location has not been chosen yet, but Denver, Wichita or Chicago seem the most viable. CMS leaned toward Denver because of its easy accessibility and central location.

CMS reviewed the consultation on inter-Mennonite relationships held in October 1982 and agreed with its findings which affirmed inter-Mennonite endeavors, including the various service agencies, Mennonite World Conference and the work of CMS itself. At the same time, the council wondered who was giving overall direction to inter-Mennonite endeavors.

They did not agree with one consultation participant who suggested that Mennonite Central Committee become the overarching agency that would coordinate other ministries. In the words of one CMS member, the idea seemed to suggest that "denominations should just lie down and let MCC take over."

Members agreed that MCC has been able to maintain its inter-Mennonite effectiveness precisely because it has not tried to take over the efforts and programs of its member constituencies. Noted Myron Augsburg of the Mennonite Church: "Under the present pattern MCC doesn't affect our (denominational) identity. If this change would come about, it would."

The council affirmed the value of the consultation in general and agreed that a second one would be of value, perhaps in 1987. This time, they added, an effort should be made to have the meeting dominated less by the various inter-Mennonite agencies themselves, and have more participation and input from denominational leaders.

Joint celebration event.

The council spent time reviewing the highly successful joint gathering of Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite general assemblies in Bethlehem, Pa., this past summer. Leaders from the two participating groups praised Bethlehem '83 as a "major people-forming event" and a significant step toward closer cooperation. Would Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ be interested in joining them for a similar event in the future?

Yes and no, was the reply. Yes possibly, if such an event was held solely for the purpose of celebration and fellowship. No, if the underlying intent was the future merger of the four groups.

"If it has that kind of overtone (merger), I think from our standpoint it would be problematic," said Arthur Climenhaga, CMS chairman and executive secretary for the Brethren in Christ.

"Our leadership may be ready to move more rapidly (toward closer cooperation), but I can't say the same thing about Mennonite Brethren generally," added Nick Rempel, secretary of the Mennonite Brethren General Conference.

Representatives of both the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonites said Bethlehem '83 had not been and should not be cast as the first step in a merger process. At the same time, eventual merger down the road was not being discounted by either group. They added that they hoped to "bring along" other Mennonite groups in exploring serious means of cooperation. But if the other groups declined to participate, the two largest Mennonite bodies in North America would walk the path alone.

In the end council members agreed

that a joint celebration event that would bring together the four groups—perhaps as early as 1989—would be a significant “people-forming event,” though logistics would present a formidable obstacle. “Where can we put together 20,000 people?” asked one member.

A statement of “Inter-Mennonite cooperation in North America,” passed by both Bethlehem ’83 assemblies, had committed the two groups, among other things, to form a committee representing Mennonite and Brethren in Christ denominations that would “explore steps of cooperation at the binational level.” When it was made clear that such a proposal did not connote merger, CMS agreed that they could function for the time being as that committee since cooperation is one of their chief functions.

In other matters, the council discussed a statement submitted by the Brethren in Christ regarding the activities of the self-named Brethren/Mennonite Council for Gay Concerns. CMS members clarified that the advocacy group for persons of homosexual orientation was not recognized as an official organization of any church group. They suggested that each denomination “work through the issues” as a body of concerned believers.

A second area of concern was whether Mennonites should officially participate in an upcoming “Faith and Order Commission” sponsored by the National Council of Churches (U.S.). Mennonites had been invited to participate in the discussion of several areas of church life. One CMS member feared that even minimal participation could be interpreted as an endorsement of the controversial organization, perceived by some to be ultra liberal in its positions.

At the same time, noted Ross Bender, believers churches have something to contribute to such discussions and a witness to make to such organizations. “Are we being faithful without finding some way to communicate to them our particular understandings? Or is it enough for us never to sit at the discussion table with them?”

The council agreed that having some input might be beneficial, but that Mennonites and Brethren in Christ should not be listed as official participants.

Jake Tilitzky, recently elected as president of the General Conference Mennonites, was selected as CMS chairman for the coming year. Don Shafer moderator of the Brethren in Christ, will serve as vice-chairman.—a *Meeting-house article*. ■

January 1984

BOOK REVIEW

The North Star Story, by Earl D. Brechbill. (Shippensburg, Pa.: Beidel Printing House, 1983) 356 pages, \$18.50

Reviewed by Harriet S. Bicksler

The North Star Story is both history and autobiography. Written by Earl Brechbill to commemorate fifty years of mission work at the North Star Mission in Paddockwood, Saskatchewan, it is also one man's story about a particular portion of his own life.

First, as a book written to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the North Star Mission, *The North Star Story* is a tribute to the many people who have been involved with the mission over the years. Besides recounting the history of the mission's beginnings and its subsequent development, Brechbill has told stories about people which otherwise would likely have been lost or forgotten. Two such people are Albert and Geneva Cober, to whom credit is given for their large role in founding the work at North Star.

Others include Maurice Moore and Curley Logan, both residents of the community. Moore eventually became superintendent of the mission for a time after having served faithfully in other capacities. Curley Logan, by contrast, became a Christian only on his deathbed during the time the Brechbills were at North Star. He is described as being a valued friend of the missionaries, yet he harbored resentments in his life which for a long time prevented him from accepting Christ.

Logan's daughter, Frances Logan Harmon, is cited by Brechbill as an example of one whose Christian testimony and subsequent service to the church at large proves the worth of the mission effort. By worldly standards, the North Star Mission could be accused of being neither successful nor cost-effective (it never produced large numbers of converts in spite of years of effort). But because the mission produced such people as Frances Harmon, Winnie Johnson Swalm, Leone Dearing Sider and others, Brechbill declares that it was well worth the effort.

As autobiography, *The North Star Story* provides valuable insight into the life and thought of one Brethren in Christ minister and his family. By far the largest portion of the book is devoted to the six years that the Brechbills spent at

North Star—a time which he describes as “the six best years of our lives.”

Claiming to have been blessed with “almost total recall” when he wrote the book, Brechbill amply illustrates that by his detailed descriptions of life at North Star. The reader learns quickly that Brechbill has a peculiar fascination for (and skill with) automobiles and farm machinery: each machine is given its technical name, and each repair is catalogued carefully. Also, because of the preoccupation of the inhabitants of the Northland with severe winters and other weather-related problems, Brechbill gives several accounts of his own battles with the elements. One that stands out is a thirteen-hour marathon against snowdrifts and extreme cold that resulted from what started out as a simple fourteen mile round trip to town.

Another incident which occupies a lot of space in the book is Brechbill's near encounter with death from inhaling gasoline fumes. His recovery was painful and slow, and, in fact, incomplete enough to contribute to their decision to leave the mission after six years of service.

In the years following their departure in 1951, the Brechbills returned a few times to visit the people and community they had come to love. The latter pages of the book, while primarily a record of the last thirty years, bring the reader up-to-date on people whom the Brechbills had known while at North Star. In so doing, Brechbill praises the faithfulness of mission workers, church members, and community people. The pages are filled with epitaphs to faithful Christians who had, as Brechbill puts it, “answered the summons to come up higher,” “exchanged time for Heaven,” or “gone home to glory.”

A literary critic likely would note that the book is flawed by excessive detail, irrelevant digressions, and a poor writing style. Nevertheless, *The North Star Story* accomplishes its stated purpose. Further, it is a valuable addition to the growing library of books written by Brethren in Christ people about aspects of Brethren in Christ history and life. As an insight into the history of one Brethren in Christ mission endeavor and into the life of one Brethren in Christ family, the book deserves our consideration. ■

The North Star Story is available in several of the Christian Light Bookstores, or may be obtained from the author at 7345 Molly Pitcher Highway, Greencastle, PA 17225.

church news



Gareth and Phyllis Evans

On Sunday, October 30, 1983, Gareth Evans was ordained to the Christian ministry. The service was held at the Delisle Community Chapel, Delisle, Saskatchewan, where Gareth serves as pastor.

Gareth's father, former missionary to Italy and 86 years of age, gave the ordination sermon. Rev. Douglas Sider, senior minister at Massey Place Community Church, Saskatoon, delivered the charge. The ceremony of ordination was conducted by Bishop Harvey R. Sider, who concluded with the ordination prayer.

Converted later in life, Gareth served with the Niagara Area Youth for Christ. Following this ministry, he with his wife, Phyllis, accepted the pastorate at Delisle on the Canadian prairies where he has served for nearly three years.



The Vern Bosserman family

Ridgemount Brethren in Christ Church, Hamilton, Ontario, was the setting for the ordination service for Vernon Bosserman, on Sunday, November 20, 1983.

Bishop Harvey R. Sider conducted the service of ordination and delivered the charge. The ordination sermon was presented by Dr. Bruce Hicks of Iowa, Vern's brother-in-law.

Vernon with his wife, Meredith, has been pastor of the Ridgemount Church for five years. For the last year, he has served as pastor of the new church plant-

ing effort at Burlington, Ontario. He is a graduate of Western Evangelical Seminary and is currently pursuing a doctor of ministry program at Ashland Seminary.

The Bossermans have three daughters, Christina, Laura, and Lisa.

Allegheny Conference

The annual Allegheny Conference MPF Retreat was hosted by the **Mechanicsburg, Pa.**, congregation. The offering received was more than \$2,000.00, with approximately 260 attending.

The **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., recently received a \$1,000 check from the Norman Wadel Estate. The check was given in honor of Mr. Wadel's mother who was a member of the congregation. • A group of students and staff from God's Bible School held a special weekend of music and sharing for the **Big Valley** congregation, Belleville, Pa., on Nov. 11-13.

Nineteen persons were received into fellowship by the **Carlisle, Pa.**, congregation on Sunday, Nov. 20. This day was also designated as Harvest Home, when gifts of food were donated by the congregation for the Carlisle Food Bank and the local soup kitchen. • The **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., reports six persons were baptized recently.

Rev. Charlie B. Byers served as guest speaker for spiritual renewal services which were held by the **Cedar Heights** congregation, Mill Hall, Pa. A membership reception service was held for nine persons on Nov. 9. • The **Colyer** congregation, Centre Hall, Pa., reports baptizing nine young people on Sunday evening, Oct. 23.

Rev. and Mrs. John Fries were installed as the pastoral couple of the **Dillsburg, Pa.**, congregation on Sunday morning, Dec. 4. • The **Green Spring** congregation, Newville, Pa., dedicated a public address system in memory of Clair McElhane. Mr. McElhane was a deacon and member of the church board.

Rally Day was held by the **Montgomery** congregation, Mercersburg, Pa., on Sunday, Oct. 30. The morning service was provided by the Sweet Freedom Singers and the evening service was highlighted by a play given by the **Pleasant Valley** congregation, Ellitsburg, Pa. • The **Springhope Chapel**, Fishertown, Pa., reports holding revival services on Oct. 16-23. Rev. Steve McIlveen served as the evangelist.

Atlantic Conference

The **Conoy** congregation, Elizabethtown, Pa., reports holding an evangelistic crusade from Oct. 26-30. The evangelist was Rev. Eddie Jones from Michigan. • A Leadership Day was held by the **Elizabethtown, Pa.**, congregation on Saturday, Nov. 12. Workshops were held for all church leaders.

Chaplain David Randolph with the Orange County Chaplain Ministries shared the morning message with the **Holden Park** congregation, Orlando, Fl.

A Family Life Conference was held on Nov. 5 and 6 by the **Lancaster, Pa.**, congregation. Guest speakers were Duane and Nancy Sider. • Marlin and Ruth Zook presented a message on Japan to the **Mt. Pleasant** congregation, Mt. Joy, Pa., on Sunday, Nov. 13.

The **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, Pa., held a four-day prophetic conference. Rev. David Levy was the guest speaker. • The **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., reports that four persons were received into fellowship and three were baptized.

Central Conference

The **Bethel Community** congregation, Cassopolis, Mi., held a singspiration on Sunday evening, Oct. 30. • Guests of the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, In., on Sunday, Nov. 13, were John and Esther Spurrier, missionaries to Zambia. The Spurriers shared in the morning and an afternoon service. A fellowship meal was held.

Twenty-five walkers from the **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Oh., participated in the community Crop Hunger Walk. • The **Mooretown** congregation, Sandusky, Mi., held a Homecoming Service on Sunday, Nov. 20. Rev. Melvin Stauffer presented the morning message, which was followed by a noon meal.

A farewell service and meal were held for Jim and Ellyn Book by the **Morrison, Il.**, congregation. The Books, deacon and wife at Morrison, have gone to serve as VSers at the Paxton Street Home in Pa. • Miracle Sunday was realized by the **Nappanee, In.**, congregation. An offering of \$6,500.00 was received to erase a deficit, exceeding their \$5,000.00 goal.

A Sing-a-Long service was hosted by the **Northridge** congregation, Springfield, Oh., with the youth of the **Beulah Chapel** in Springfield sharing. • For the winter months, the **Pleasant Hill, Oh.**, congregation has begun meeting in homes on Wednesday nights for Bible studies. The groups are using the book, *Love Within Limits*.

The **Sheboygan, Wi.**, congregation reports being extensively involved with the recent Lowell Lundstrom Crusade. Approximately 1,200 persons attended the crusade each night. • Two persons were received into fellowship on Sunday, Nov. 13, by the **Western Hills** congregation, Cincinnati, Oh.

Canadian Conference

The **Bridlewood** congregation, Agincourt, Ont., observed Anniversary Sunday on Nov. 20. Rev. Paul Hostetler, founding pastor, was the speaker. A fellowship meal followed the morning service. • A musical concert was given Sunday night, Nov. 6, to the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont., by "The Sole Foundation Singers." Fellowship and refreshments followed the service.

Ethel Doner, member of the Kindersley, Sask., and missionary to Haiti for 40 years, has been presented with the "Compassion Award" by Compassion, a Christian relief and development organization. This was the first presentation of the award, which is given in recognition of the contributions of Canadians working with children.

The **New Life** congregation, Collingwood, Ont., held a Prayer Trek on a Saturday morning in October. The group had prayer and praise as they walked on Bruce Trail, with lunch and fellowship following. • Rev. Jim and Doris Cober, pastoral couple of the **Port Colborne, Ont.**, congregation, recently took a trip to India.

The **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., reports holding spiritual growth meetings on Nov. 9-13. Rev. Doug Sider was the speaker. • The **Westheights** congregation, Kitchener, Ont., recently heard Ray and Darlyss Kipe share about their work in Zambia.

Midwest Conference

Recent visitors in the **Bethany** congregation, Thomas, Ok., were David and Florence Carlson, who serve with Trans World Radio. Mr. Carlson brought the morning message. • The **Rosebank** congregation, Hope, Ks., held a "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner" program on Sunday, November 20.

A Corrie Ten Boom film, "Jesus is Victor" was sponsored by the **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Ks., on Sunday evening, Nov. 27.

Pacific Conference

A Family Life Conference was held by the **Alta Loma** congregation, Rancho Cucamonga, Ca., on Nov. 10 and 11. The resource speakers were Eber and Ruth Dourte.

The **Labish** congregation, Salem, Or., held an all-church retreat on Nov. 18-20. Christian psychologist Albert Stiefel was the speaker. • The David Carlsons recently shared with the **Upland, Ca.**, congregation, in both the morning and evening services.

For The Record...

Births

Alleman: Adrienne Renee, Sept. 28; Charles and Denise Alleman, Green Spring congregation, Pa.

Bert: Karen Marie, Nov. 3; Jared and Mary Bert, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Blair: Julie Imanie, Nov. 8; Kenny and Jodi Blair, Abilene congregation, Ks.

Boris: Kevin Daniel, Nov. 3; Frank and Patricia Boris, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Brown: Ricky Junior, Nov. 20; Ricky and Jackie Brown, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Brubaker: Joseph Lee, Oct. 1; Jeff and Joann Brubaker, Manor congregation, Pa.

Coyle: Andrew Joshua, Oct. 13; Larry and Johanne Coyle, Falls View congregation, Ont.

Cvetkovic: Mathew Muonimir, Oct. 3; Sam and Lena Cvetkovic, Welland congregation, Ont.

deJonge: Wesley Thompson, Sept. 15; Levi and Pauline deJonge, Ridgemount Community congregation, Ont.

Dourte: Allison Renee, Nov. 10; chosen by Lamar and Sue Dourte, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.

Freed: Kayla Lynn, Oct. 16; Ronald and Sandy Freed, Cross Roads congregation, Pa.



On Sunday, Nov. 6, the **Chambersburg (Pa.)** congregation dedicated an addition to their present church. The addition includes a new 400-seat sanctuary, five large classrooms for adults, an audio control room, and nursery.

Sharing in the service in addition to Pastor A. Graybill Brubaker Jr. was Dr. Owen Alderfer, who brought the dedication sermon, and Bishop Alvin Book, who led the congregation in the dedication rites.

The former sanctuary is being renovated into a prayer meeting chapel and offices on the first floor, and a preschool department on the second floor.

Frey: Aaron Emerson, Oct. 18; Wilson and Louise Frey, Manor congregation, Pa.

Gano: Brittany Paige, Nov. 5; Chris and Penny Gano, Beulah Chapel congregation, Oh.

Green: Erica Lynn, Oct. 17; Jeff and Debbie Green, Bethel Community congregation, Mi.

Herbal: Lacey Dawn, Oct. 19; Kent and Lori Herbal, Bethany congregation, Ok.

Herr: Kathryn Lynn, Oct. 21; Lyle and Judy (Sellers) Herr, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Hock: Latasha Renee, Oct. 1; Randy and Loriann Hock, Green Spring congregation, Pa.

Hosler: Jason Edward, Sept. 22; John and Linda Hosler, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Hower: Kristen Nicole, Sept. 25; Paul and Linda Hower, Cedar Grove congregation, Pa.

Keim: Bradley James, Oct. 30; Paul and Debbie Keim, Fairland congregation, Pa.

Kipe: Brandon Alexander, Oct. 22; John and Eleanor Kipe, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

Klassen: Eric Wayne, Oct. 10; Abe and Cheryl Klassen, Houghton congregation, Ont.

Leaman: Roshana Dee, Sept. 30; David and Joyce Leaman, Waynesboro congregation, Pa.

Lemmond: Jonathan Cameron, Aug. 12; Peter and Kathy Lemmond, Ridgemount congregation, Ont.

Lohberger: Alicia Marie, Oct. 10; Alton and Ariel (Blacketter) Lohberger, Briscoe, Tx.

Maust: Michelle Alicia, Oct. 21; Steve and Joan Maust, Alta Loma congregation, Ca.

McCombs: Alisha Lynn, Sept. 30; Roy and Sharon (Sherk) McCombs, Cheapside congregation, Ont.

Miller: Rebecca Yael, Nov. 1; David and Debbie (LaPorte) Miller, Fairview congregation, Oh.

Peckman: Kirk Allen, July 8; Lowell and Evelyn Peckman, Chambersburg congregation, Pa.

Peters: Melissa Sue, Nov. 10; Rodger and Pam Peters, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

Proud: Sarah Marie, Sept. 2; Ron and Lynda Proud, Ridgemount congregation, Ont.

Shafer: Seth Nelson, Sept. 17; Dan and Kathy (Miller) Shafer, Ontario congregation, Pa.

Slabaugh: Ryan Allen, Sept. 24; Roman and Donna Slabaugh, Western Hills congregation, Oh.

Smith: Stephanie Joy, Oct. 16; Mark and Dana Smith, Manor congregation, Pa.

Sollenberger: Kyle Andrew, Nov. 1; Larry and Carol Sollenberger, Air Hill congregation, Pa.

Stewart: Robert Lawrence, Sept. 20; Adex and Kathy Stewart, Ridgemount congregation, Ont.

Stoltzfus: Janet Elizabeth, Sept. 25; John and Tammy Stoltzfus, Green Grove congregation, Pa.

Wightman: Emily Jean, Nov. 5; Doug and Luci (Heise) Wightman, Killarney, Manitoba.

Wyer: Katie, Aug. 26; Dave and Linda Wyler, Ontario congregation, Ca.

The Grantham Brethren in Christ Church is searching for a Christian education director, to begin service in the summer of 1984.

Apply to Ken Mark (secretary of pastoral committee), Grantham, Pa. 17027.

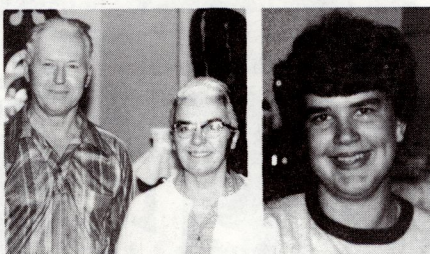
New VS staff at Kenbrook

Recently joining the Kenbrook Bible Camp staff in voluntary service assignments are Raymond and Ruth Wingert, from the New Guilford, Pa., congregation, and Susan Kanode, from the Elizabethtown, Pa., congregation.

Raymond is serving as maintenance director and Ruth is in charge of house-keeping at the Retreat Center. Both assist in the kitchen with meal preparation for retreat center guests. For many years they farmed the "home place"

where Raymond grew up, not far from the New Guilford Church.

They bring considerable experience from their background in farming, camp involvements with Camp Joy-El and Spring Lake Retreat and special food



Wingerts

Kanode

service projects within the congregation. The fine appearance and cleanliness of the camp is a result of their diligent efforts.

Susan joined the staff September 1 as retreat center cook. She is a graduate of Messiah College with a behavioral science major. Her previous experience includes food preparation at several fast-food restaurants and managing a group home for the mentally retarded. Her creativity in meal preparation is being appreciated by the many retreat center guests.

Kenbrook Bible Camp is located near Lebanon, Pa.

Weddings

Bassler-Hoffman: Barbara, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hoffman Jr., and Barry, son of Mrs. Evelyn Bassler and the late Walter Bassler, Oct. 15, in the Cedar Grove Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Kenneth Hepner officiating.

Craun-Byers: Sheryl L., daughter of Bishop and Mrs. John A. Byers, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Keith, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Craun, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 20 in the Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church with father of the bride and Randall Byers, brother of the bride, officiating.

Cunningham-Ladoucier: Germaine Ladoucier and Greg Cunningham, both of Port Colborne, Ont., Sept. 3.

Engle-Points: Carolyn Points and Stanley Engle, Thomas, Ok., March 5, in Hubert, Ok.

Garrett-Brown: Virginia Lynn, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Richard D. Brown and George Harry, son of Mrs. F. Margaret Garrett, Pequea, Pa., Sept. 3, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Gochnauer-Wettig: Darlene Ann Wettig, foster daughter of Mrs. Mary Yellets, Conestoga, Pa., and Donald Ray, son of Mr. and Mrs. Elvin Gochnauer, Lancaster, Pa., March 5, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Harmuth-Zimmerman: Pamela Zimmerman, Cleona, Pa., and Brian Harmuth, Lebanon, Pa., Oct. 8, in the Fairland Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Earl Musser officiating.

Hayes-Paul: Debra Denise, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Paul, Hummelstown, Pa., and Lacy Jr., son of Mrs. Eleanor L. Hayes and Mr. Lacy Hayes, Aug. 6, in the Skyline View Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. John Reitz Jr. and Rev. Kenneth Letner officiating.

Hornbaker-Poe: Joyce, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Poe, and Gary, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hornbaker, Oct. 15, in the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Barton Starr, uncle of the bride, officiating.

Kratz-Rittenhouse: Janie Rittenhouse and Howard Kratz, June 11, in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Al Detweiler officiating.

Lewis-Lupold: Carolyn A., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Lupold, New Providence, Pa., and Gregory S., son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lewis, Peach Bottom, Pa., April 23, in the Pequea

Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Lowe-Myers: Karen Elaine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd S. Myers, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Jeffrey Neal, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Lowe, Nov. 5, in the Cross Roads Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Dale H. Engle officiating.

Martin-Sourbeer: Joyce Lynn, daughter of Mrs. Patricia Sourbeer and the late Warren Sourbeer, and David S. Martin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Stevens, Willow Street, Pa., Sept. 24, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Parmer-Charles: Debra Joan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Charles, and Donald Lee, son of Estella Parmer and the late Harry Parmer, both Lancaster, Pa., May 7, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Roland-Johnson: Suzanne, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul S. Johnson, Willow Street, Pa., and Dennis L., son of Mr. and Mrs. Amos H. Roland, Manheim, Pa., Oct. 15, in the Pequea Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Seigafuse-Dunlap: Sherry Dunlap and Anthony Seigafuse, Aug. 27, in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Sam Hollingsworth officiating.

Shenk-Jung: Carmen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Jung, West Germany and Dennis, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Shenk Jr., Conestoga, Pa., Aug. 11, in the First United Methodist Church, Phenix City, AL, with Rev. Albert Hunt officiating.

Sider-Steel: Wanda Steel and Rick Sider, Port Colborne, Ont., Sept. 24, in St. Thomas, Ont.

Steager-Sides: Shari, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Sides, Nappanee, In., and Dwayne, son of Mrs. Norma Steager, Mechanicsburg, Pa., Oct. 22, in the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Arthur Brubaker and Rev. C. R. Burgard officiating.

Thomas-Landis: Gwen Landis and Brian Thomas, Aug. 13, in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Sam Hollingsworth officiating.

Veneviale-Kerr: Julie Kerr and Carmen Veneviale, Oct. 1, in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Sam Hollingsworth officiating.

Walter-Wireman: Ruth Wireman and Leonard Walter, May 27, in the Souderton Mennonite

Church with Rev. Glen Eggi and Rev. Sam Hollingsworth officiating.

Wenger-Burkholder: Kay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Burkholder, and Kevin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Wenger, Oct. 29, in the Chambersburg Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. A. G. Brubaker; Bishop Charlie Byers, great-uncle of the bride; Rev. James Ketner; and Rev. Jacob Shenk (by tape recording), uncle of the groom officiating.

Wideman-Hamilton: Joan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hamilton, Richmond Hill, Ont., and Ronald, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl Wideman, Gormley, Ont., Sept. 30, in the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Marlin Ressler officiating.

Winger-Brooks: Mary Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Allen Brooks, Welland, Ont., and Clyde Franklin, son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Winger, Stevensville, Ont., Oct. 22, in the Rice-lawn Free Methodist Church, Welland.

Zagorski-Smith: Shirley Smith and Daniel Zagorski, July 9, in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Elbert Smith officiating.

Obituaries

Brubaker: Melvin H. Brubaker, born July 7, 1903, died Sept. 21, 1983. He is survived by his wife, Anna Fry Brubaker. He was a member of the Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church where he served as deacon for 27 years. The funeral service was conducted by Rev. C. R. Burgard and Rev. Simon A. Lehman.

Cober: Irvine H. Cober, died Oct. 6, 1983, at the age of 76. He was the son of Simon and Mary Cober. He is survived by his wife, Olivia Knechtel; seven sons; four daughters; 38 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; and two sisters. A son preceded him in death. The funeral service was conducted in the Rosebank, Ont., Brethren in Christ Church.

Engle: Margaret Eyster Engle, born April 3, 1889, died Oct. 17, 1983. She was married to Michael G. Engle who preceded her in death in 1974. She is survived by four sons: Raymond, Paul, David and Homer; a daughter, Nadine Lexow; 17 grandchildren; 28 great-grandchildren, two brothers; and two sisters. She was a member of the Bethany Brethren in Christ Church where the funeral service was conducted by Rev. Charles Rickel and Rev. Charles Norman. Interment was in the Bethany Cemetery.

Hoover: Anna Herr Hoover, Grantham, Pa., born July 2, 1917 in Derry Twp., Pa., died Sept. 12, 1983. She was married to Kenneth B. Hoover who survives. Also surviving are two step-daughters: Marjorie L. Groff and Janet F. Stoner; three sisters; a brother; nieces and nephews; and five step-grandchildren. She was a member of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. The funeral service was conducted in the Palmyra Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Robert Ives and Rev. Ethan Gramm.

Kimber: Nell Anne Kimber, born Dec. 4, 1924, died Oct. 19, 1983. She was married to Rev. George P. Kimber who survives. Also surviving are a daughter, Nan Gawad; three grandchildren; a sister and a brother. A memorial service was conducted in the West Shore Evangelical Free Church by Rev. Lane Hostetter and Rev. Luke Keefer, Jr. Interment was in the Grantham Memorial Park.

Moyer: E. Verda Moyer, Souderton, Pa., born March 30, 1901, in Hatfield, Pa., died Jan. 2, 1983. She was a member of the Brethren in Christ Church and spent 19 years as a missionary in Africa and also served at the Navajo Mission. The funeral service was conducted in the Souderton Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Sam Hollingsworth and a tribute by Don Zook was read. Interment was in the Silverdale Cemetery.

Climenhaga: Asa W. Climenhaga, Messiah Village, Pa., born July 1, 1889, in Stevensville, Ont., died Nov. 17, 1983. In 1919, he married Anna Elizabeth Kipe who survives. Also surviving are several nieces and nephews. He was an ordained Brethren in Christ minister and served as a former part-time minister of the Grantham congregation.

He was a former registrar and the first dean and dean emeritus of Messiah College. He was also on the emeritus faculty of Dickinson College.

The funeral service was conducted in the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church by Rev. Robert Ives, Rev. Charlie Byers, Rev. David Hall, and Rev. LeRoy Walters. Interment was in the Grantham Memorial Park.



**Tributes to
Dr. Asa W. Climenhaga**

The Brethren in Christ Church has suffered, in the death of Asa W. Climenhaga, the loss of a loyal and valued churchman.

Dr. Climenhaga is best known for his long tenure at Messiah College as teacher and administrator. His ministries in the church at large are less well known because they occurred during his earlier years.

He was ordained as a minister in the Brethren in Christ Church in 1914 and served the Grantham congregation as a part-time minister a period of years. He served as pastor in a Methodist church for one year when a student at Taylor University.

Dr. Climenhaga preached in churches from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the Canadian West to Texas and Florida in the South. A very versatile and energetic minister, he preached for revival meetings in both tents and churches, to groups both large and small.

When he made a trip through the whole brotherhood in 1917 and 1918 to raise funds for Messiah College, he sometimes met with strong opposition, but even those who rejected his message about Messiah College responded with enthusiasm to his soul-stirring and Bible-centered preaching.

Messiah College News

Two Students Honored

Two Brethren in Christ Students have received high honors at Messiah College. Jon Hoffman, Palmyra, Pa., received one of the Scholars in Education Awards presented by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

These one-half tuition grants are given to outstanding Pennsylvania college students who aspire to become science or mathematics teachers in the state.

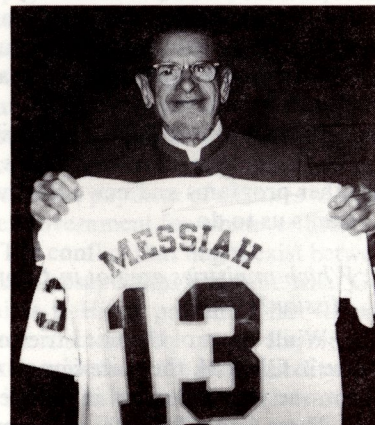
Mark Heise, New Madison, Ohio, is the sophomore Merit Scholar at Messiah College. One student is selected from each returning class by the faculty. Being named a Merit Scholar is Messiah's highest honor to a student.

Your Help Needed

The Information Office at Messiah College sends out hundreds of home-

town news releases about students who have distinguished themselves in academics, music, sports, leadership, etc. Many of these are published without the Information Office hearing about it.

When you see something about Messiah College in your local paper, please clip it and send it to the college along with the name and date of the paper. Your help in this way will be much appreciated.



Henry Hess, Class of 1913, represented the 70th Anniversary Class at Messiah's Homecoming in October.

Enrollment Percentages

	1st Sem. 1983-84	1st Sem. 1982-83	Amt. of Increase	% of Increase
Full-time	1554	1453	101	7.0%
Part-time	58	49	9	18.4%
Full-time Equivalency	1579	1472	107	7.3%
Total Enrollment	1612	1502	110	7.3%

Many older people will remember that he authored the first *History of the Brethren in Christ Church*. Dr. Climenhaga also wrote "Administrative Practices of the Educational Program of the Brethren in Christ Church." In addition, he wrote articles for the *Evangelical Visitor* and other publications.

All his days he loved the church and faithfully attended services at the Grantham Church until failing health made it impossible. May God use the memory of this good man to stimulate devotion and service in the younger generations.

The Board of Bishops

The Messiah College community joins in mourning the passing of Dr. Asa W. Climenhaga, the first dean of the college. His tenure in that office was the longest in Messiah's history.

We give thanks to God for Dr. Climenhaga's life and for his administrative leadership. We also remember and pay tribute to his versatile teaching skills which enabled him to aptly handle such diverse courses as oil painting, speech, church history, and education.

He was something of a "renaissance man" in a rather acculturated setting. But his concern for art, literature, and learning was joined with a deep reverence for the Bible and a loyalty to the church. He could bridge the broadest of gaps. In two successive weeks he might first study art at Columbia University and then hold tent revival

meetings in a rural mountain setting.

The life of Dr. Climenhaga showed a true respect for history and was marked by his own interest in preserving things from the past. We also know him as a patron of the arts, which he both supported and gave leadership. The Fine Arts Center named for Dr. and Mrs. Climenhaga is a visible monument honoring their contributions.

The greatest monument to Dr. Climenhaga, however, may not be etched on brick or stone, but vividly lives on in the memories of those who witnessed the labor and creativity with which he preserved and enhanced the natural landscape of this campus. A major part of our present campus came from the Climenhaga farm. But long before official transfer of these lands, the college used the Climenhaga fields and wooded slopes just as though they were campus terrain. The apparent joy Dr. and Mrs. Climenhaga had in maintaining the natural setting and making it accessible by trails was shown in Dr. Climenhaga's characteristic whistling of happy tunes as he worked.

We regret today the loss of a past teacher and administrative leader. But in an even greater sense, we have now lost a neighbor and shaper of this campus. For he lived here nearly as long as Messiah College has been located in Grantham—some 70 years. We shall miss him, and we especially pray that God will sustain you, Mrs. Climenhaga, at this time.

D. Ray Hostetter, President

Cooperative Ministries and Mission Begins January 1, 1984

What does this mean to me?

It means that you will not need to hold back from your tithes and offerings that money which you used to save for special appeals. It means that immediately you can increase your giving through your church so it can meet an increased budget which more adequately cares for our church ministries.

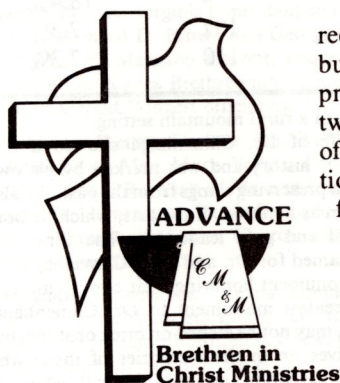
Prompt and regular giving will not only provide for the people who do our ministries, it will also provide for other programs and new initiatives we believe the Lord wants us to do.

Which ministries are not in Cooperative Ministries and Mission?

While most of the ministries of the U.S. conferences are in CM&M, there are several that have been delayed for one year or are not in for special reasons.

These General Conference ministries are not included for 1984 but will be in 1985: Life Line Mission, Navajo Mission, Spring Lake Retreat and Timber Bay Children's Home. In the Atlantic Conference, Kenbrook Bible Camp is planning to be in by 1985. Upland Manor is projected to be part of the Pacific Conference CM&M in 1985. The Allegheny Conference capital campaign for the Christian Retreat Center has been kept separate by conference action.

Several other ministries will receive further study. Roxbury Holiness Camp serves primarily the people of our two largest conferences. Many of their offerings go for operational costs instead of user fees. Paxton Street Home, with a newly adopted covenant relationship, has not asked for financial support. The Gospel Tide Hour, though supported by Men's Fellowship, is not controll-



ed by our church. The relationship of Camp Freedom needs further clarification.

Estate planning is one area that does not come under CM&M. Several of our ministries are working in this area, but are prepared to serve the interests of the whole church. Of course, Stewardship and Finance Office personnel are prepared to assist individuals as well.

January 1984—A Good Time to Review Your Estate Plans

1. As you close your books on 1983 and open new ones for 1984, a review of net worth and tax liability could prove helpful.
 - a. As a good steward, are your assets increasing? You may want to consider giving some to other people or Christian ministries.
 - b. Placing some assets in trust could lower your taxes and provide for income for someone you are responsible for who is in a lower tax bracket or for a Christian ministry.
2. Do you have a will? Or is your present will up-to-date?
 - a. Sizable increases or decreases in what you own may suggest a needed change in your will.
 - b. Changes in marital status or beneficiaries may call for revising wills.
3. How have you listed Brethren in Christ ministries in your will?
 - a. With Renewal 2000, some ministries have name changes which reflect a changing role in church life.
 - b. Certain addresses may have changed in recent years.

Consult your estate planning advisor for help on these and other questions you may have. The following employees of the General Conference are qualified to help you or can give you the names of other Brethren in Christ professionals (i.e. attorneys, trust officers, certified life underwriters or certified public accountants) who are ready to serve you.

Lester Fretz, Director of Stewardship and Finance, Canada

Box 207, Vineland, Ontario L0R 1C0
Phone (416) 563-4739

Dr. David P. McBeth, Director of Stewardship and Finance, U.S.A.

P. O. Box A, Grantham, PA 17027-0901
Phone (717) 697-2634 or 766-0598

Dr. Ira Eyster, Field Representative
805 Willow Lane, Norman, OK 73069
Phone (405) 321-1345

Rev. Henry N. Hostetter, Field Representative

584 Locust Lane, Messiah Village, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Phone (717) 697-4693

The following is also qualified to assist you:

Ray M. Musser, Executive Director

Jacob Engle Foundation, P. O. Box 1136, Upland, CA 91786
Phone (714) 985-8200

Taxes for military purposes: one alternative

The Brethren in Christ Church is one of the historic Peace Churches, and those of us who have had our roots in this church for generations have had a tradition of non-resistance and non-participation in war for as long as we can remember. Some of us go back in our experience to World War II, others to the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, and many of us are struggling with the war-peace issue of today. There has been a great diversity of opinion as to what constitutes the stand of the conscientious objector and just how we should take that stand.

Traditionally, the church has not made an issue of paying taxes destined for military purposes, but in recent years there has been a growing sentiment in this direction. Recently, there has been a lot of activity in favor of the World Peace Tax Fund. This would offer an option to those opposed to paying taxes for war purposes. I have supported this project because I believe that this option should be open to those who for conscience sake cannot support the military through their taxes. However, the World Peace Tax Fund is not yet law, and it faces many hurdles before it can, if indeed it ever does, become law.

Some have felt that the only course left for them is to refuse to pay the portion of their Federal Income Tax that is destined for military purposes. However, following this course can and does involve the participants in illegal action. This could lead to prosecution which could result in stiff penalties for refusing to obey the laws of the United States. I would like to suggest a better way that would accomplish the same objective and still could be done legally.

The U.S. tax laws and the I.R.S. very generously allow up to 50% of a taxpayer's adjusted gross income to be given in charitable contributions and to be listed under itemized deductions on Schedule A. So instead of taking an illegal deduction in order to avoid paying war taxes, I am suggesting that we make our contributions to the church and mission causes large enough to accomplish the same purpose.

Possibly someone will object, "Oh, but I couldn't afford that." Well, consider that taking a stand for conscience sake is going to cost us something! Are we willing to bear the cost of discipleship?

Let me give a personal testimony. For the past several years my wife and I have given in contributions, mostly to the church and missions, about 30% of our gross income. This has resulted in our paying no Federal Income Tax at all in 1980 and only minimal amounts for 1981 and 1982. It is true that as senior citizens we enjoy some tax advantages that younger people do not. It also may be that a certain number of low income people who do not have enough deductions to itemize might have difficulty in meeting the criteria I am suggesting. But for the most part, I believe there is a formula here that could be tailored to meet the individual needs of those who feel deeply enough about the problem to be willing to pay the price. I have worked closely with taxes for a number of years and would be glad to try to help anyone who seeks advice on the matter.

The price of this course of action may seem high, but I believe this to be a better plan than to withhold a portion of our taxes illegally. Besides, the work of the Lord could benefit enormously through following this course.

So I offer this as a Christian alternative. I am not suggesting that all persons will necessarily feel that it is improper to pay our taxes in full. Indeed, there is much in Scripture to indicate that paying taxes is a Christian's duty. But this plan would enable the truly concerned taxpayer to reduce his taxes legally and at the same time would greatly benefit the work of the Lord.

To those who would complain of the cost, let me remind you that the cost of discipleship is high. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Surely the Christian alternative should be worthy of our consideration. The apostle Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

Lewis B. Sider
Messiah Village
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Observations about the almost inevitable

Almost inevitably, in any discussion of payment of taxes used for war, someone will say, "But Jesus said, 'Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.'" And that usually settles it. It is generally assumed that this sentence provides incontrovertible evidence that Jesus supported the payment of all taxes to whatever government for whatever use.

The conflict that might exist between what Caesar claims is his and what God claims is His is presumed not to exist when it comes to taxes. Payment of taxes, aside from the responsibility to do it, is seen to be an act which is outside the realm of morality, an act which is not fair game for the prophetic ministry of the church, an act to which God's revelation through his Word, through the life and teachings of his Son, and through his Spirit in the community of believers is not applicable. The case appears to be simple, clear, and shut.

But I don't think it is. In fact, I think the passage could be saying other things altogether. Over the years I've read the passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke often. I've thought a lot about them, and I've read what other people have to say about them. I have come to believe that these passages are anything but a clear statement against the practice of war tax refusal and redirection. Because the issue is important to me and because I think the passage is often misinterpreted, I'd like to list my observations. First let me quote the account as it is recorded in Luke's gospel (New International Version).

Keeping a close watch on him, they [the teachers of the law and the chief priests, Luke 20:19] sent spies [Matthew identifies the "spies" as the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees, and Mark identifies them as Pharisees and Herodians], who pretended to be honest. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. So the spies questioned him:

next page, please

"Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

He saw through their duplicity and said to them, "Show me a denarius. Whose portrait and inscription are on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

He said to them, "Then give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

Luke 20:20-26

Observation 1: Jesus' answer to the tax question was a clever answer to a dangerous question.

This encounter with the spies of the chief priests and the teachers of the law comes after two other encounters with the chief priests and the teachers of the law, all quite possibly in the same day. In the first encounter (Luke 20:1-8) they asked him, with apparent malice (Luke 19:47, 48) and lack of sincerity, "Tell us by what authority you are doing these things" (Luke 20:2). He never did answer them, but instead turned the spotlight back on them by asking them a question which they could not answer without falling into a trap. When they said they couldn't answer his question, he said he wouldn't answer theirs.

In the second encounter, Jesus told the parable of the tenants. The teachers of the law and the chief priests understood correctly that the parable condemned them for their rejection of Jesus, and they "looked for a way to arrest him immediately" (Luke 20:19).

In the tax encounter they were still hoping "to catch Jesus in something he said so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor." They were not motivated by a desire to learn from Jesus, as they pretended, but rather by the hope of providing evidence which might lead to his arrest. Part of Jesus' motivation again was to avoid their trap. As in the first encounter, Jesus did not answer their

question directly. Instead he put them on the spot by asking them to show him the coin with which the tax was paid and by asking them whose portrait and inscription were on it.

The coin, a Roman denarius, bore the image of Tiberius with an inscription which meant "Emperor Tiberius, august son of the august God." Julia Augusta, Tiberius' mother, was on the other side of the coin with the title, "high priest." Many Jews considered the coin idolatrous and possession of it a sign of collaboration with the Roman government. By asking his questioners to produce the coin, Jesus exposed their loyalty to Caesar. When he said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's," he may well have been saying, "Give this idolatrous coin back to Caesar and come follow me" or "Repent and be converted." Certainly such an interpretation would be consistent with his repeated condemnation of the Pharisees.

In any case, his words succeeded in avoiding entrapment, at least for the time being. The chief priests and the teachers of the law went away astonished because his answer put them on the defensive and did not provide evidence for his arrest. The words of Jesus were, it seems to me, not a treatise on payment of taxes, but a clever way to avoid a trap and at the same time continue to condemn his questioners for their disloyalty to God.

Observation 2: Evidence points to Jesus' possible opposition to certain taxes.

The fact that Jesus' questioners hoped they could trap him on the tax question suggests that they suspected him of opposing payment of this tax to Caesar. The apparent plan was to get him to make a clear and unambiguous statement in public. That, they believed, would be adequate reason for his arrest. Their plan failed, but Luke describes their failure by saying, "They were unable to trap him by what he had said there in public," leading one to believe that he might have said things in private (in Luke's presence perhaps) that, if said in public, would have made him liable to arrest.

In fact, the rumors of his opposition to payment of taxes to Caesar persisted to his trial before Pilate. There his accusers said, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a King" (Luke 23:2). The accusations, of course, may have been false, but Luke says nothing to suggest that. Pilate asked Jesus about the kingship accusation, and Jesus affirmed that he was the king of the Jews. But Luke did not record any further investigation into the other accusations.

Observation 3: Great care must be taken when fleshing out Jesus' skeletal statement.

The command, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's," is an empty structure until one knows what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God. The usual way to fill in the blanks is to conclude that any taxes levied by Caesar belong to Caesar, but Jesus didn't say that. The communication to his questioners may just as well have been that it was the idolatrous coin which they possessed (and which quite likely possessed them) that belonged to Caesar. By divesting themselves of that coin and the collaboration with Rome that it represented, they could become free to give their loyalty to God.

I think the possible implication that we are to pay all taxes to Caesar is worth examination. But I think it is unfair to the passage to assume that that is what Jesus meant and to base categorical condemnation of war tax refusal and redirection on that one statement which is, at best, ambiguous.

Observation 4: Everything belongs to God.

The usual interpretation of this passage leads to a division of ownership between God and Caesar. Caesar has first right to taxes; God has first right to other things. I don't think that fits with the broader revelation. All of the fruits of our labor belong under the stewardship of God.

Inasmuch as governments contribute to orderly society, inasmuch as they do not demand what is God's, taxes are due to them. But when our governments ask us to hate with our dollars, when they ask us to fight evil with evil, when they ask us to live by the sword, then we must politely but firmly say no. We will not willingly give that with which God has blessed us to kill or threaten to kill those

for whom Christ died. Instead we will make every effort to turn our swords into plowshares, to redirect our war taxes to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and minister to those in prison.

Observation 5: Every aspect of our lives, including the payment of taxes, is under the Lordship of Christ.

I think that Jesus may have opposed the payment of this particularly onerous and compromising tax to Caesar. But that does not mean that Jesus or the Scriptures are generally opposed to payment of taxes. On the contrary, Paul clearly teaches (Romans 13:6, 7) that we should, along with paying respect to whom respect is due and honor to whom honor is due, pay taxes to whom taxes are due.

Even here, however, payment of taxes is to be done with discretion (to whom they are due). Paul's comments about taxes are set in the context (Romans 12) of his recounting of the ethical principles by which Jesus' disciples are to live: nonconformity to the world, genuine love even for persecutors and enemies, and overcoming evil with good. I believe that the Scriptures support payment of taxes for the common good. But I believe that paying taxes, like everything else we do, must flow out of the new creature which God has made of us. It must be subject to God's revelation, and it must be transformed into an act which seeks God's kingdom.

Much of what I've said in these pages is conjecture—plausible conjecture based on evidence, but conjecture nevertheless. My contention is that the usual conclusion drawn from this passage of Scripture is also conjecture, and should be seen as such. It seems to me that the passage, while not by itself an unambiguous call to war tax refusal and redirection, is also not an unambiguous condemnation of that practice. By itself, it is at best something of an enigma, a passage which needs the light shed by God's entire revelation to us in his Word and in his Spirit as it moves in the church.

Our goal in our war tax refusal and redirection, as in the rest of our lives, is to give Caesar what is Caesar's and God what is God's. Just what that means in the current situation must be learned by listening to what God's spirit calls us to do.

Dale R. Bicksler
Harrisburg, PA

More on Central America

I am beset with serious doubts about the anti-U.S. material that has been appearing recently in the *Visitor*, more particularly in relation to Nicaragua. There are a number of reasons. If I want to read about the faults of the U.S. government and the Reagan administration, I can pick up the *Christian Century*. It does a far better job of defaming our government particularly as to Central American policies. The editorial staff appears totally dedicated to it. If I wish a well-rounded picture from what seems to an ordinary uninformed reader to be a more knowledgeable source, I have the *US News & World Report*. I find something on either side there. If I want something more analytical and definitive on "The Central American Mess," I can pick up the appropriate "Firing Line" script. Basically my doubts settle around the question as to whether this particular issue (Nicaragua), especially since it has been presented rather one-sidedly, really serves the intended purposes of "The Official Publication of the Brethren in Christ Church."

But to get to the material already published, I am sure Gerald Schlabach and Rich Sider (October issue) know far more about Nicaragua than I do. They've spent time there; I have never been there. But I might come close to knowing as much about the U.S. as they do. One very valid question that rises without requiring much specific information is whether Gerald could say equally adverse things about the Sandinista government and remain in Nicaragua. I am sure he can come home anytime. As far as the *Visitor* is concerned, it is credibility we are concerned about, not the unclear matter of who is right or wrong. No side is 100 percent correct. When our presentation becomes too biased, we lose credibility. For information on this subject there are much better sources.

I have no quarrel with Rich Sider's opinions based on on-site observations (Oct. issue). But when he tries to discredit Jeane Kirkpatrick, U.S. Representative to United Nations, by saying she got her information from the CIA and then tells you to find out about that organization by reading such and such a book, he hasn't said as much concerning the issue as Jerel Book did in the first place. (August issue). If you want to be exercised on one particular side of any well-known issue, go to a bookstore and choose your book.

Sider says, "Whether the Sandinistas are the bad guys or the good guys really should not be the main question for peacemaking Christians." But then he says one sentence later, "There is no doubt that U.S. actions toward Nicaragua are hostile and *that* fact should govern our response rather than whether the 'enemy' is good or bad. (What is it that should govern a Christian response?) I have no desire to question the work of the MCC in Central America or Rich Sider's value to it or his understanding of the problems there; but he should be taken to task for trying to influence the readers of the *Visitor* with such a deceptive lack of logic, especially when the issue is more political than missionary and the argument is between "Christians" rather than governments. But logic was not to be his contribution.

I recognize what I write here does no service for the true MCC purpose in Central America. But neither do these anti-government arguments that are directed to the minds of *Visitor* readers by MCC representatives there. Have MCC representatives developed a proneness to anti-U.S. government expressions, or have I been reading too narrowly lately?

I express an honest concern. I am for the MCC. I am for the welfare of the needy. I am for the Christian faith. I am for the Brethren in Christ Church. I am for the *Evangelical Visitor*. (My current subscription lasts until 1986.) But socio-political arguments are for the debater, not for the one who is on assignment for the Kingdom of God.

Millard Herr
Upland, CA

Contributions Invited for *Dialogue* and *Readers Respond*

Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Longer letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

Longer contributions are welcomed for *Dialogue*, a forum for readers to express their opinions on a broad range of topics relevant to the mission of the church and to living the Christian life.

Since each article or letter represents the view of the writer, they do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Brethren in Christ Church.

During 1983, the "Year of the Bible," a monthly feature in the *Visitor* was NAE's guide for reading through the Bible in a year.

This year, we will feature a devotional guide prepared by NAE which suggests daily reading focusing on the transforming character of God.

The God of Changed Lives

CHANGE IN MY LIFE

January

My God is eternal, changeless

Day		Book & Chapter
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Ex. 3:7-17
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Numbers 23:18-24
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Psalms 102:23-28
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Malachi 3:1-6
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	Heb. 1:1-12
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	James 1:12-18
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Rev. 1:4-8

Therefore, I experience:

Worship	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	1 Chron. 16:7-36
	M	<input type="checkbox"/> 9	Psalms 84
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Isaiah 42:5-12
	W	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Luke 1:39-55
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Luke 4:1-13
Praise	F	<input type="checkbox"/> 13	John 4:5-24
	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 14	Heb. 10:19-25
	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Psalms 104:1-9
	M	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	Psalms 135
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 17	Psalms 146
Faith	W	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Psalms 149
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Psalms 150
	F	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	Daniel 2:1-23
	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	Rev. 5:6-14
	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 22	Mark 11:12-14; 20-23
	M	<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Romans 4:1-15
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 24	Romans 4:16-25
	W	<input type="checkbox"/> 25	Galatians 3:1-14
	T	<input type="checkbox"/> 26	Galatians 3:15-29
	F	<input type="checkbox"/> 27	Heb. 11:1-16
	S	<input type="checkbox"/> 28	Heb. 11:17-40

My God is holy

S	<input type="checkbox"/> 29	Ex. 3:1-6
M	<input type="checkbox"/> 30	Joshua 24:14-24
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 31	Job 34:10-15

February

Day		Book & Chapter
W	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Psalms 119:137-144
T	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Isaiah 6:1-7
F	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Isaiah 43:14-24
S	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Rev. 4:1-11

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Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you . . . will tell you everything that is happening here. Colossians 4:9

Onesimus

Dear Paul:

We are in the time of year here when people are talking about new beginnings. It seems the new year is a time for getting rid of the old and making fresh starts. They call them New Year's Resolutions. Everybody makes them, not only the Christians. Some resolutions seem rather superficial to me such as: go on a diet, stop drinking so much coffee, get more sleep, and so on. I doubt that those kinds will be kept more than a month. (Then they wait for eleven months to start over again!) But as I talk with the Christians about this custom, some of their resolutions are serious. I want to tell you about that and then ask you a question.

These resolutions arise from a reflective self-awareness (that's the terminology they use for conscience) of the fact they haven't done all that they should, or they have left some important things undone. The Christians take this seriously. Their new resolutions include things like: to be more aware of other's needs; to witness for Christ more regularly; or to be Christ-like in their actions. Jonathan Edwards, a leading Christian of another era, made resolutions. One of his was "Resolved never to do anything which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life." Isn't that a straight one? He must have kept it, for he became a great preacher and many people here in the church still read his writings.

Recently I was talking with a young fellow in our fellowship who said he finds it hard to be a Christian, for it takes a lot of courage to always do the right things. I told him that becoming a better disciple does not happen automatically, but must be pursued. We must concentrate every desire and effort upon it. I expect he's made some resolutions now.

Now my question. When you wrote to the Philippian Church, you made a pretty strong resolution, too. "Brethren, I count not myself apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to

those things which are before, I press forward . . ." Did you mean this to be a New Year's resolution or a daily resolution? I expect the latter for, the way you are treated, it had to be a daily resolve. Otherwise, you could not have been so victorious. For me, it must be a daily resolve. I think it is for many of the Christians in the church here who show such joy in their lives.

One sad thing I notice is that hard-to-forget misunderstandings often become between Christians. In our Bible study, I'll remind them of what you wrote about the daily exercise of resolve. They must let the Holy Spirit rid them of all negative attitudes and unforgiving spirits. They must forget any hurts, misunderstandings, and failures and press toward Christ Jesus daily. He will help them and never forsake them.

I almost got carried away there. I will close with this. Because I remember how you helped me and others, I wish you would write a letter of encouragement to the church here as you did the church at Philippi. And, Paul, would you pray for the young man who said he finds it hard to be a Christian?

Onesimus

P.S. My New Year's resolution is to write you shorter letters.

With this January issue we introduce a new writer of the Onesimus column. Well, actually, we won't "introduce" Onesimus II until the end of his or her writing assignment.

*Have you deduced who served as Onesimus I? Those who recall the "James" column in **therefore** of years ago and concluded the two columns were written by the same person were correct in identifying J. Wilmer Heisey as Onesimus I. For years associated with Brethren in Christ Missions, Wilmer now is executive secretary of MCC-U.S. Thank you, Wilmer, for your contribution to these pages.*

Beginnings

The close of the old year and the beginning of the new traditionally serves as a time of reflection and evaluation of the past, as well as an opportunity for planning for the future. Unfortunately, much of this reflection is superficial, and commitment to significant change is often short-lived.

For the Brethren in Christ, however, the new year ushers in some very significant changes as reflected in the work of "Renewal . . . 2000," the restructuring process now in its final stages of approval.

Cooperative Ministries and Mission (CM&M), the unified approach to supporting brotherhood agencies, begins to function this month. The *Visitor* has carried numerous articles outlining the rationale for CM&M, along with details on how it will operate. As congregations and individuals, let us join, through CM&M, in wholehearted support of the various ministries we have chosen to do together—overseas missions, church planting, Christian education, and caring ministries to persons in need, to mention only a few.

Another significant change coming later this year is the restructuring of the boards which carry out these denominational ministries. As reported in the December *Visitor*, the new boards have been named and are beginning to function. Required yet is second reading approval of necessary constitutional changes, followed by confirmation of the new board members—all on the agenda of General Conference this July. After that, the new boards officially begin their work.

In the process of reorganization, a number of responsibilities have been moved from one board to another. For example, the work of the Commission on Music and Worship, which had served under the Publication Board, becomes part of the job description of the new Board for Congregational Life. Several of the urban ministries presently administered by the Board for Missions, such as Fellowship Chapel in New York, Life Line Chapel in San Francisco, and the new work in Quebec, have been assigned to the new Board for Evangelism and Church Planting. Other programs of the mission

board, such as San Francisco's Life Line Mission and Timber Bay Children's Home in Saskatchewan, will be administered by the Board for Brotherhood Concerns.

This reassignment of responsibilities, along with the high percentage of new members on all of the boards, offers a natural opportunity for program review and evaluation. Of course, current boards in varying degrees have been conducting program review over the years. But new boards can bring a fresh perspective to the tasks of assessing current programs and projecting new initiatives. One hopes that boards will invest sufficient time and energy to produce thorough evaluations, not merely cursory or haphazard reviews.

If the reorganization offers the positive opportunity for fresh evaluation, it may also be the occasion for things "falling between the cracks." For example, oversight of several local programs, mentioned above, will be shifting to new boards which do not have experience in managing institutional staff. The needs of persons whom the church has sent into ministry is of paramount concern; people are too valuable to "slip between administrative cracks." In a different vein, areas of current concern, such as the call for the church to be active in urban America, the focus on ethnic ministries, the very contemporary issues of peace and justice—these, too, are being assigned to new boards which have not been grappling as boards with such matters, all of which demand our best creative thought and faithful response.

Understanding our history, evaluating present programs, sensing the Lord's call to our brotherhood, and charting future directions—clearly, the new boards have their work cut out for them. As an observer at the recent new boards workshop, I was encouraged by the high degree of enthusiasm and commitment evidenced by the board members in accepting these challenges. Our brothers and sisters deserve our interest, prayer, and feedback as they assume the weighty responsibilities we are asking them to carry.

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THE ARCHIVES C
MESSIAH COLLEGE
GRANTHAM PA 17027

General Conference Information

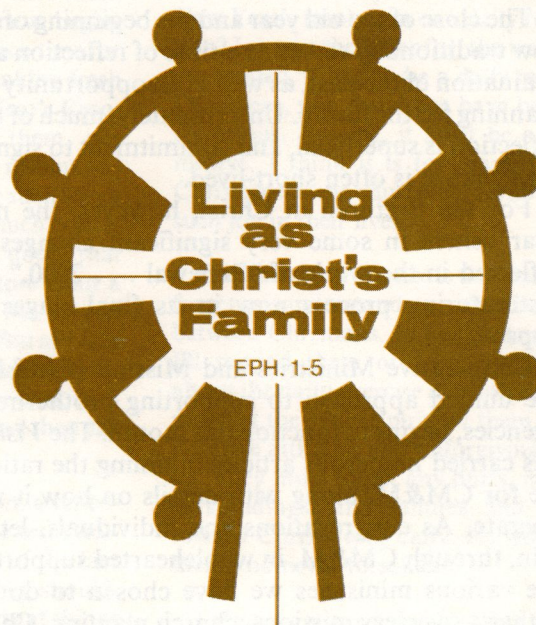
This issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* includes the special General Conference insert. Please read it carefully if you plan to attend General Conference, and kindly fill in the registration form by the indicated deadline.

Your pastor and bishop either have, or soon will have, extra copies of the insert. You can also feel free to make photo copies to take care of your needs.

The first business session of the 1984 General Conference, convening at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., will be on Saturday, June 30, at 1:00 p.m. Registration at Conference will be on Friday evening, June 29, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and on Saturday, June 30, from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The final business session is scheduled to conclude at noon on Thursday, July 5, 1984.

Ample lodging and good meals are available on campus. The facilities are excellent.

The Convention Director will again be assigning space for exhibits. Please make your request in terms of 8-foot modules. To cover rental costs, kindly include a check for \$10 for each 8-foot table needed. A limited number of tables will be near electrical outlets. If you need an outlet, please include that information with your request and check (made out to General Conference).



Boards, committees, and agencies may submit requests to the Convention Director for meeting rooms to be used before and during the Conference. This can be done either before or during the Conference. Give date and time, and how many will be in the group. The Private Dining Room, seating 40, can be booked for mealtimes.

Each issue of the *Evangelical Visitor* will have General Conference Information from now through June. You will find it helpful to keep these issues at hand.

For more information, contact Paul Hostetler, Grantham, PA 17027. Phone (717) 766-2621. If no answer, call 766-8914 and leave a message.

Missions Convention Information

The Brethren in Christ Missions Convention will be held during the two days prior to the 1984 General Conference. The convention is open to everyone. We encourage youth as well as adults to attend; missionaries as well as missions supporters.

You do not need to attend General Conference to attend the Missions Convention. However, to register, you *must* use the General Conference registration form, even if you will not be attending General Conference. A copy of that form is in this issue. If attending both conventions, you must register for both at the *same time on the same General Conference form*. You will receive *one bill* for room, board, and registration for both conventions. This bill must be

completely paid with *one check* prior to the Missions Convention.

There is no registration fee for the Missions Convention. The cost for meals and rooms is the same per unit as that of General Conference. For those lodging at Messiah College, a working cost figure (package plan) would be \$38-\$44. This includes two nights' lodging and six meals.

Registration will be on Wednesday, June 27, 7:00-9:00 p.m. The convention will convene at 9:00 a.m. Thursday and close Friday at 4:30 p.m.

Transportation to and from airports will be provided by the General Conference staff. Children's programs for children through age 11 will be held during the convention.